

WWII

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in World War II



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GETTYSBURG

Julian Brazier
on the second day

WWII

THE 1945
LANDSLIDE

How the British
Army turned on
Churchill



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HISTORY

August 2013 | Issue 35 | £3.95

MONTHLY



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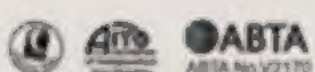
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ON THE COVER:

Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852): a master of defensive battle.

Photos WIPL

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Military History Monthly aims to cover conflict on land, at sea, and in the air through all periods of history, with expert commentary written in an intelligent and accessible way.

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Welcome

By Dr Neil Faulkner



Churchill is supposed to have asked one of his leading commanders towards the end of the Second World War whether he could count on his men's votes in the forthcoming general election. 'No sir,' came the reply. '80% of them will vote Labour.'

Somewhat dismayed, Churchill replied, 'Well, at least that will give me 20%.'

'No sir. The other 20% won't vote at all.'

The story may be apocryphal. The figures are certainly inaccurate. The proportion of service personnel who did not vote in 1945 – largely because they were still scattered across the world – was much higher.

However, academic studies have shown that, of those service personnel who did vote, a large majority did indeed vote Labour. Britain's soldiers, sailors, and airmen contributed disproportionately to the Labour landslide of 1945.

This was not the only occasion in history when the armed forces were more radical than society at large. The same was true when the British Army was founded in 1645 and again, almost certainly (though there are no definitive studies), at the end of the First World War in 1918.

It is a reminder that change matters more than continuity in the history of a long-lived institution like a national army. Viewed historically, the British Army is really a succession of very different armies, rather than a single institution.

We explore this theme further in the concluding section of our History of the British Army in 25 Battles.

Also in this issue, Julian Brazier analyses Lee's attack on the second day of Gettysburg in 1863, Jules Stewart marks another anniversary with a piece on Vitoria – Wellington's last great victory in Spain, in 1813 – and David Porter brings his story of naval gunnery up to the Battle of Jutland. Finally, we have a double feature courtesy of Tim Newark and Neil Richardson, both of whom have new books out on the role of Irish soldiers in British service.

Neil Faulkner.

Let us know what you think...

We would love to hear your opinions on this issue of the magazine. What are your favourite bits? What should we cover in the next issue? You can give us your feedback:

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NEIL RICHARDSON

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This month we have five copies of *The Men Who Lost America* to be won. Enter the *MHM* Quiz to be in with a chance of winning!



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DISPATCHES



Our round-up of this month's military history news stories.



COLONEL RAINSBOROUGH HONOURED

Tony Benn unveils plaque to champion of democracy

Two matchlock musket volleys shattered the peace of a secluded riverside cemetery in Wapping in London's historic East End on Sunday 12 May 2013. They were fired by men of Colonel Rainsborough's regiment in honour of the fallen leader. Rainsborough was a Parliamentary officer in the English Civil War, a leading member of the Levellers, and a victim of Royalist assassins.

The Sealed Knot detachment were participants at the unveiling of a plaque to mark the spot where Rainsborough was interred on 14 November 1648. This was after a funeral procession through London that had turned into a monster Leveller demonstration, at a time when the party was at the height of its power.

The New Model Army had just won the Second Civil War, Parliament was about to be purged of its conservative majority, and the King would soon be put on trial and executed. The Army high command was under pressure from rank-and-file soldiers, backed by a radical movement in London, to take stronger action against Royalism, root out Parliamentary backsliders, and grant the right to vote to common men.

Rainsborough was the most senior officer to support the Levellers. He had taken a lead



Top Men of the Sealed Knot's Rainsborough regiment fire a volley in honour of their fallen colonel.

Inset Veteran socialist politician Tony Benn unveils the plaque to Rainsborough on the wall of St John's Churchyard, with London dockers' leader Brian Nicholson behind, and Tower Hamlets Councillor Rania Khan beside.

for the party at the famous Putney Debates of 1647, when the high command had been confronted by representatives of the rank and file. The subject of discussion at Putney was nothing less than the future shape of the British state.

'I really think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he,' Rainsborough proclaimed, 'and therefore ... I think it's clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own counsel to put himself under that government.'

The senior officers remained unmoved.

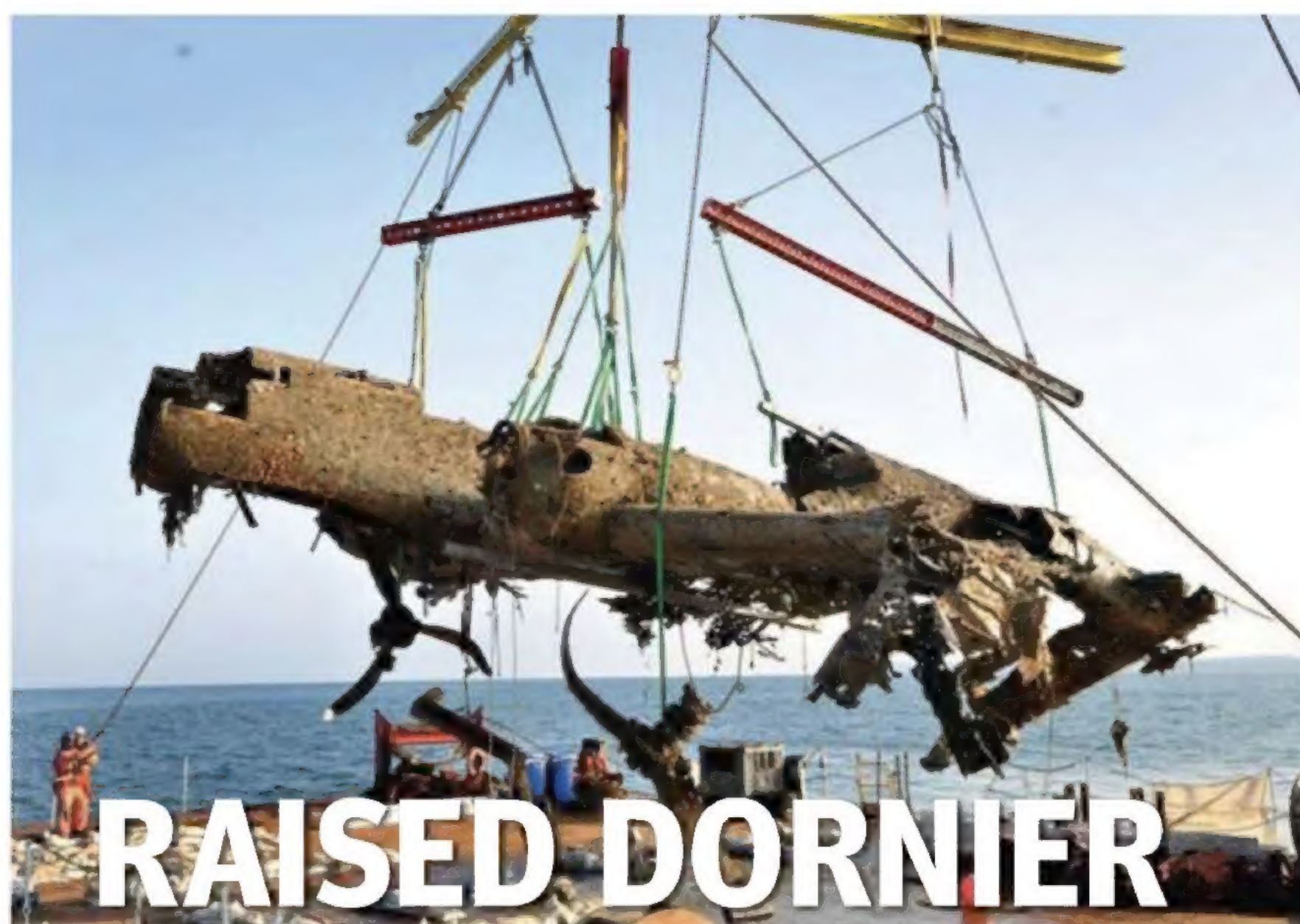
'All the main thing that I speak for is because I would have an eye to property,' announced General Ireton. Leveller mutinies were crushed. The wider movement was too weak to break through. It would be more than two centuries before Rainsborough's vision of democracy could be realised.

Thomas Rainsborough (1610-1648)

was the son of an admiral and diplomat who became a seafarer and committed religious radical in the years leading up to the Civil War. He served the Parliamentary cause first as a naval officer, then as a colonel in the New Model Army. A siege warfare expert, he participated in the sieges of Bristol, Berkeley Castle, and Worcester. He was elected MP for Droitwich in 1647, by which time he was a leading figure in the Leveller movement.

As the Levellers carried his coffin to its resting place – wearing sea-green and sprigs of rosemary – they handed out a leaflet saying that Rainsborough had made 'King, Lords, Commons, Judges shake, Cities and Committees quake'. He was 'just, valiant, and true'. The leaflet ended with the words that here Rainsborough 'bids the noble Levellers adieu'.

The plaque was unveiled by veteran socialist politician Tony Benn in St John's Churchyard in a ceremony organised by Tower Hamlets Council and supported by the new National Civil War Centre in Newark.



RAISED DORNIER ARRIVES AT COSFORD

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford has taken delivery of the world's last surviving Dornier Do 17, recently salvaged from the bottom of the English Channel. The fuselage and wings were escorted from Ramsgate, Kent, to the museum by two low-loader lorries.

Delighted members of the public and museum staff welcomed the Dornier as it arrived on site. Shortly after its arrival, a crane lifted the fuselage and wings from the transportation lorry before being placed inside the purpose-built hydration tunnels, where the Dornier will stay for the first stage of its conservation.

Alex Medhurst, General Manager at RAF Museum Cosford, said, 'After all the hard work, planning, and setbacks, it's great to know the Dornier is finally here at Cosford. It will be a rare and exciting opportunity for visitors in the Midlands to get up close and personal to a unique piece of aviation history and the chance to view it in its salvaged state.'

More than 1,500 Dornier 17 medium bombers were built. The twin-engine, twin-fin configuration, together with the narrow fuselage and shoulder-mounted engines, gave the aircraft a distinctive silhouette and earned it the nickname 'The Flying Pencil'. Over 400 were employed by the *Luftwaffe* during the Battle of Britain.

Research by the

Air Historical Branch and RAF Museum has identified the aircraft lying on the Goodwin Sands as probably being Dornier 17 Z-2 Ser No 1160 of 7 Staffel, III Gruppe/KG3 (7th Sqn of 3rd Group of Bomber Wing 3).

Coded 5K + AR, this aircraft was lost on Monday 26 August 1940 when operating from St Trond in Belgium. The aircraft landed on Goodwin Sands at low tide (13.40hrs) after an attack by fighters that damaged the engines and left the crew members wounded. The aircraft is currently on display to the general public. It is anticipated that thousands of aviation enthusiasts from across the Midlands will head to the museum to catch a glimpse of the aircraft.

Top The wreck of the Dornier 17 being raised from the bottom of the sea, before being transported to RAF Cosford.

Below The plate identifying the plane as Dornier 17 Z-2 Ser No 1160 of 7 Staffel, III Gruppe/KG3



NEWS IN BRIEF



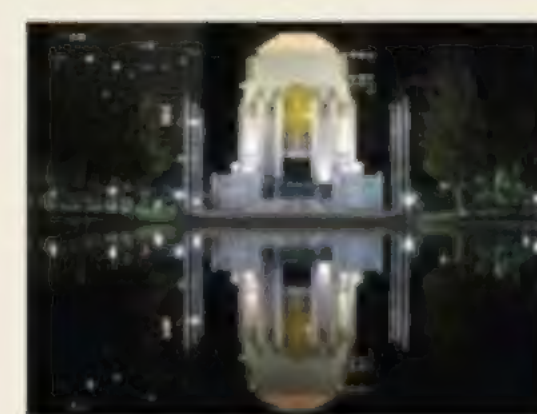
FORCES SAUCES

A new charitable brand conceived by veterans has recently been launched by both The Royal British Legion and Stoll. Forces Sauces was founded and inspired by Bob Barrett, a veteran who turned to Stoll in 2004 when he needed support.

It was Bob's vision to launch Forces Sauces nationally in order to raise money to get even more veterans' lives back on track. And respecting Forces Sauces' roots, today's recipes aim to spice up hearty portions of Great

British food, packed with real taste and natural spicing you can be proud to serve.

The range will include the appropriately named Corporal Ketchup and Brigadier Brown. Both flavours of sauce can now be found nationally in Tesco supermarkets.



ANZAC WAR MEMORIAL EXPANSION

The Australian War Memorial museum is currently undertaking a project to create

a comprehensive digital archive of the ANZACs and their deeds, and of the wider Australian experience of war. The collections selected for this project will reflect the experiences of Australian servicemen, nurses, and civilians during the First World War, not just well-known personalities. The project will digitally preserve the Memorial's collections and provide full copies for research on the Memorial's website.

As part of this project the Memorial is seeking contact with relatives of ANZAC soldiers. If you have any information about these people, or their descendants, the Memorial would love to talk to you. Contact: Nick Crofts, PubandDig@awm.gov.au



WWI CENTENARY NETWORK GROWS

The First World War Centenary

Partnership, a network of local, regional, national, and international cultural and educational organisations led by IWM (Imperial War Museums) has now reached 1,140 members.

The First World War Centenary Partnership, established by IWM in 2010, will present a programme of cultural events and activities from 2014-2018 to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. This collective international programme will enable millions of people to discover more about life during the First World War, connecting current and future generations with this conflict.

HAVE YOUR SAY



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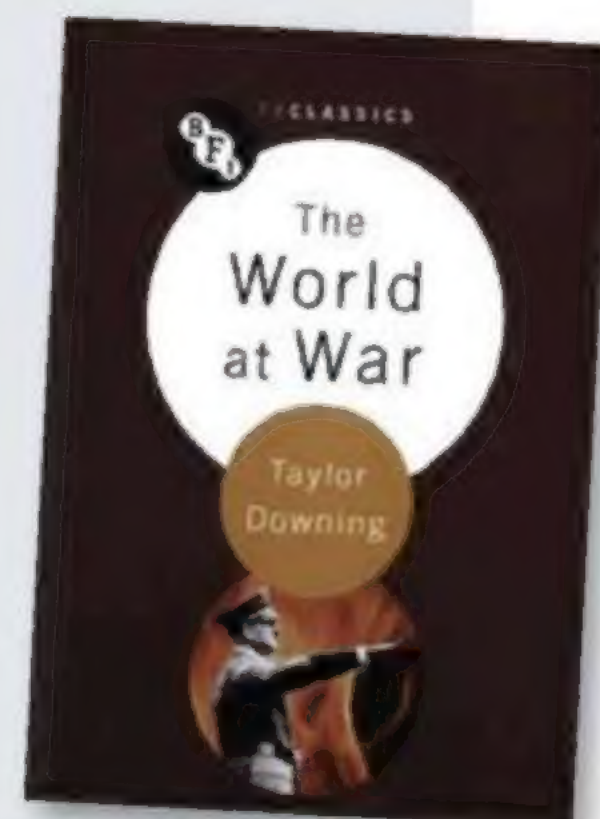
WORLD AT WAR STILL BEST

I compliment Neil Faulkner on his review of Taylor Downing's book detailing the making of *The World at War* (Reviews, *MHM* 32). I can remember the effect the series had on me when it was first released and I have since watched the whole series and individual episodes many times.

I can think of only two series that compare: the BBC's series on *The Great War* and Ken Burn's brilliant series on the American Civil War. Sadly, the many historical and archaeological series recently on television have failed to learn the lessons of these series. We have presenters far more interested in being 'television personalities' – bored looking actors supposedly replaying historical events but doing no more than distract from the narrative. The use of meaningless computer gimmicks is more fitted to the video game market, and there are some very poor scripts that fail to convey the story that is the historical subject of the programme.

I hope that this review and the book it describes will do something to take the producers of television programmes back to the clean, clear, classical techniques of *The World at War*. I fear that I am likely to be disappointed.

Michael Parker
Hampshire



MORE CREDIT FOR MONASH

I take issue with the author of the 'Battle of Amiens' feature (*MHM* 30). General Rawlinson is given full credit for the outcome of the battle. No mention is made of Lieutenant-General John Monash, the real architect of the successful outcome.

General Rawlinson, commander of the 4th Army, which included Monash's Australian Corps, had the good sense to accept that Lieutenant-General John Monash had the brains and the ability to devise a new approach to warfare on the Western Front. Monash combined infantry, tanks, artillery, machine-guns, and aircraft with deception, psychology, and detailed planning, including the first use of aircraft to resupply ammunition by airdrops.

All these innovations were first used at corps level by Monash to capture Hamel on 4 July 1918. That battle lasted 93 minutes. Hamel was the first offensive action on the Western Front by the Americans, 2,000 of whom were attached to the Australian Corps and under Monash's command.

The success of the Battle of Hamel convinced Rawlinson and Field-Marshal Haig that Monash should plan the battle of Amiens. The battle lasted for 12 hours. The 'British' forces were mainly Australian and Canadian troops, who together comprised 70% of the total.

Until 1914, Monash was an engineer by profession and a part-time citizen soldier. He was qualified and practised



as a lawyer, and was an accomplished pianist. He was a Jew, born in Australia of German parents. He rose from colonel in 1913 to lieutenant-general in 1918. For further reading, I recommend *Monash: the outsider who won a war* by Roland Perry

Ron Lawford
Darwin

BRITISH 9TH ARMoured BRIGADE LEFT OUT

In your article on the Battle of El Alamein (*MHM* 32) you credit the 2nd New Zealand Division among other formations as being at the 'sharp end'. Missing from the story is the British 9th Armoured Brigade, which was attached

to the 2nd New Zealand Division. General Bernard Law Montgomery allocated 9th Armoured Brigade the task of breaking the anti-tank defences of the Italian and German forces in preparation for the following armour to exploit the gap in the enemy defensive line.

The 9th Armoured Brigade contained the following units: 3rd The King's Own Hussars; Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry; Warwickshire Yeomanry; 14th (mechanised) Battalion, Sherwood Foresters and 31st New Zealand Anti-Tank Battery.

After the battle the General Officer Commanding the 2nd New Zealand Division, Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg VC, awarded the units of 9th Armoured Brigade the honour of using the Fern Leaf on their armoured and soft-skinned vehicles. This tradition is still maintained by the successor units, which display it on armoured vehicles, soft-skinned vehicles, arm badges, regimental ties, and on Comrades Association colours.

Derek Smart



RAMSEY 1940s WEEKEND

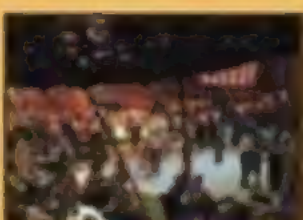
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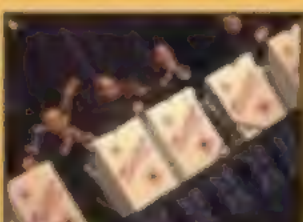


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THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN JUNE - JULY 1863



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The Day the Cold War turned Hot...

HARVEY BLACK

THE RED EFFECT



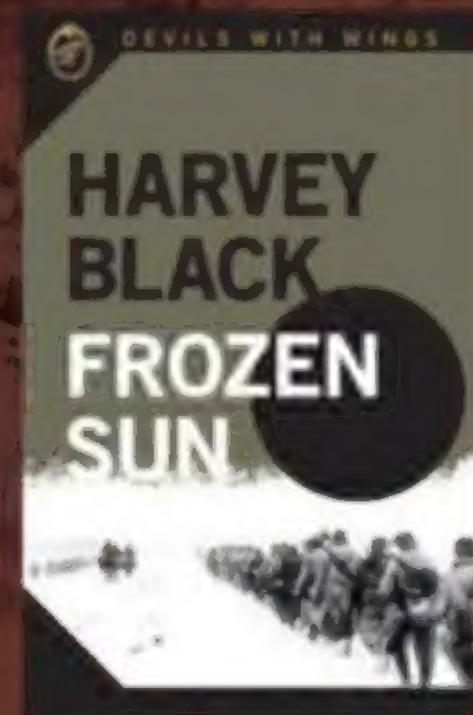
The Day the Cold War turned Hot

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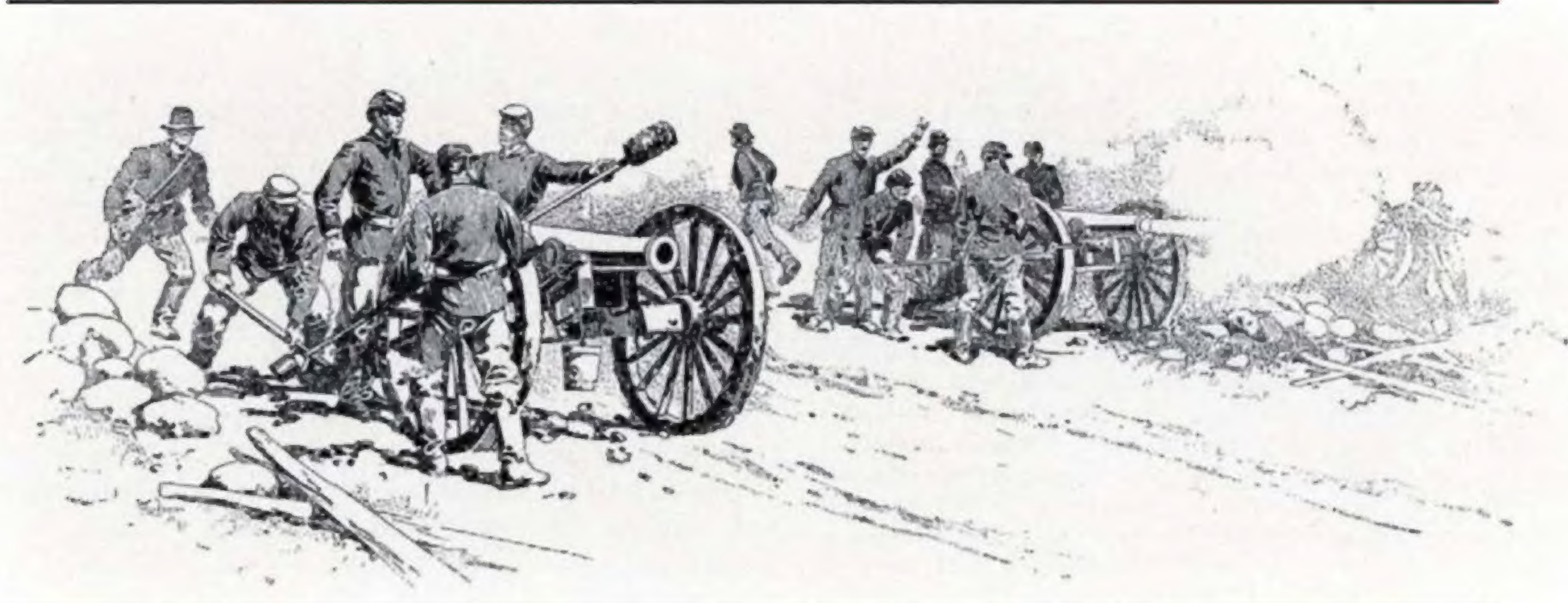
Also available now – Harvey Black's thrilling and meticulously researched World War 2 series **DEVILS WITH WINGS**.



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GETTYSBURG

Part 3 THE SECOND DAY



Julian Brazier continues his in-depth analysis of America's greatest battle, 150 years ago this month.

At 3am on the second day of the struggle at Gettysburg, Lee rose in the dark to begin shaping his attack against the Union left.

Thanks to 2nd Corps commander Ewell's halting and sticking north of Gettysburg, Lee's army was spread round a long bent perimeter, while the larger Army of the Potomac was pouring into a much shorter, tighter position opposite. Furthermore, with Stuart's cavalry still a day away, Lee's flanks were weak and, worse, his ability to reconnoitre severely constrained.

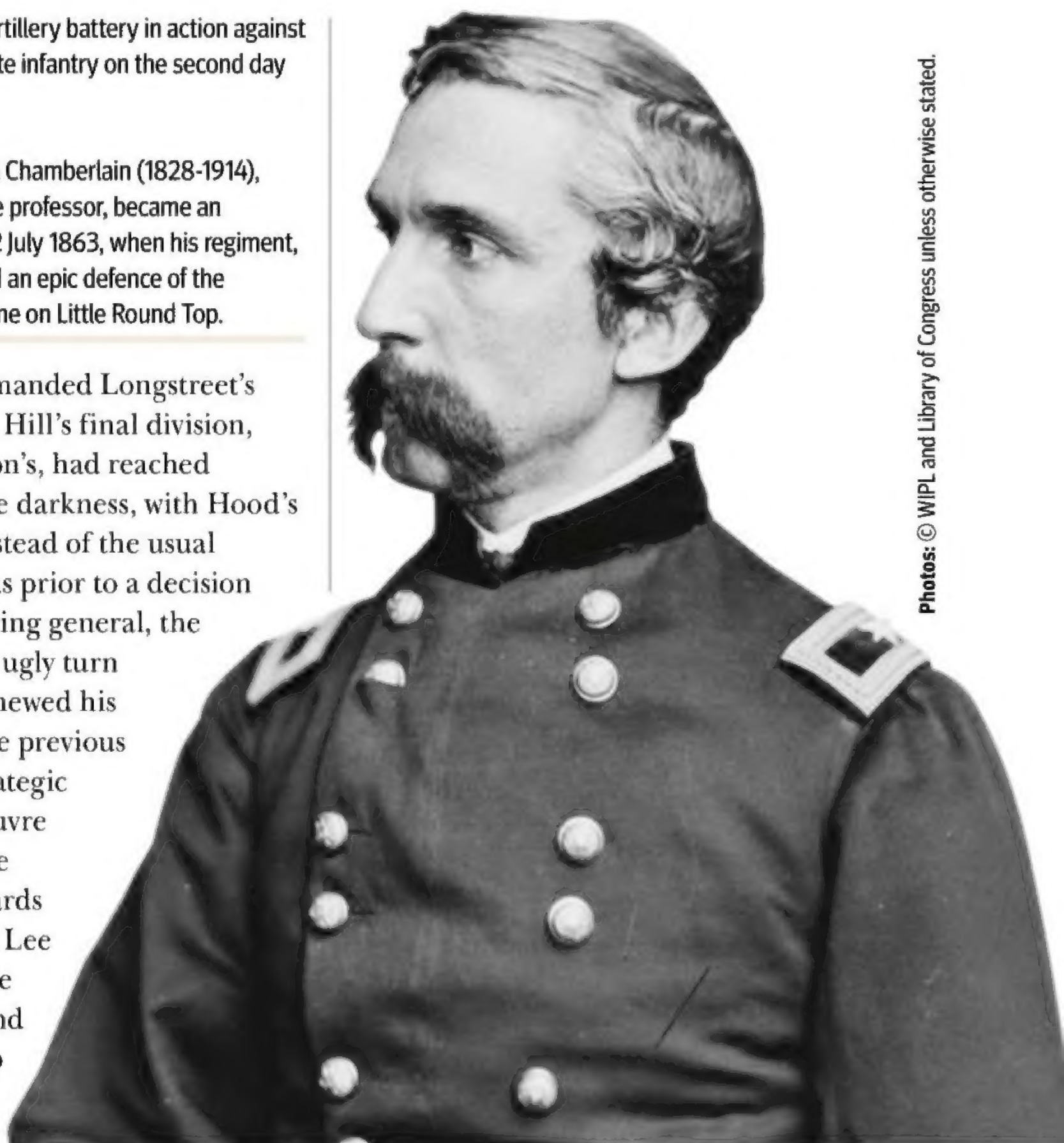
His first action was to dispatch his engineer officer, Captain Johnston, to lead a reconnaissance south of the Union left. Soon after, he sent his artillery commander, General Pendleton, to look for fire positions behind and above the start-line to support the attack, and then another staff officer to Ewell to find out what had happened – or rather not happened – to the promised attack on Culp's Hill the previous evening. Already his small staff was overstretched.

At 5.15am, he met Longstreet and Hill, the corps commanders whose troops would execute the day's main attack, and

Above Hall's Union artillery battery in action against assaulting Confederate infantry on the second day of Gettysburg.

Right Colonel Joshua Chamberlain (1828-1914), an abolitionist college professor, became an American legend on 2 July 1863, when his regiment, 20th Maine, mounted an epic defence of the far left of the Union line on Little Round Top.

Hood, who commanded Longstreet's leading division. Hill's final division, Richard Anderson's, had reached Gettysburg in the darkness, with Hood's close behind. Instead of the usual exchange of ideas prior to a decision by the commanding general, the meeting took an ugly turn as Longstreet renewed his demand from the previous evening for a strategic flanking manoeuvre to march past the enemy's left towards Washington. But Lee summed up: 'The enemy is here, and if we do not whip him, he will whip us.'



Photos: © WIPL and Library of Congress unless otherwise stated.

Right Lee's plan of attack on 2 July was for an echelon attack from right to left, with pressure mounting steadily along the Union line, aiming to force Meade to prop up his left by denuding his right. This would open the way for a Confederate breakthrough on the Union right.

Below Confederate infantry march into action.

An open flank?

Johnston returned and reported the Union flank open. Pendleton arrived later with a similar story. Both were wrong: there was already the bulk of two Union corps in the area they pronounced empty, albeit concealed by trees and broken ground. The absence of Stuart and his cavalry had left Lee blind, his tiny staff inadequate to fill the gap.

The prospect of an open flank seemed to promise a repeat of Lee's triumph at Chancellorsville two months earlier. McLaws, another of Longstreet's divisional commanders, joined the conclave. Lee briefed him on his division's role at the far end of the Confederate attack.

Briefing a divisional commander directly, rather than going through his corps commander, was a new departure, and Longstreet tried to contradict Lee, and then forbade McLaws from carrying out his own reconnaissance. (McLaws denounced his fellow Georgian corps commander's conduct years later as disgraceful.)

Nevertheless all the generals were now clear on the commanding general's plan, and Lee issued them with orders to prepare for their march south to the start-line beyond the Union left, once the rest of the troops had arrived.

A solid flank

At 9am, Lee rode over to see Ewell at 2nd Corps HQ on the southern edge of Gettysburg. He gently rebuked Ewell and his divisional commanders for failing to follow through on first Cemetery and then Culp's Hill, both now formidably defended. Then he explained the planned manoeuvre against the Union left – which Ewell's corps would be unable to see from the other side of Cemetery Hill. He reiterated his orders that Ewell must commence a strong 'demonstration' against Cemetery and Culp's Hills when he heard the main attack going in, and that the demonstration was to become an assault if the hills were stripped of defenders to meet the main attack.

Lee returned to his HQ, where Longstreet and Hill were waiting. Porter ▶



Alexander, Longstreet's artillery chief, soon left them to get his guns into position on the right. The assembled generals heard shooting as Union sharpshooters attacked Anderson's troops taking up position nearby, but it petered out as the Unionists were repulsed.

Longstreet asked if he could wait for his last brigade (Law's) to arrive before setting out with the infantry. Lee agreed. Law's brigade completed a 24-mile march and arrived tired and thirsty, but, upon their arrival at 1pm, orders came to set out for the start-line for the general attack, so they left without water.

Deployment

Movements at Gettysburg – especially by the Confederates, with virtually no maps – were handicapped by a combination of thick patches of woodland and uneven ground, making sight lines to the enemy problematic. Soon the head of Longstreet's column came to a crest, where, to avoid being spotted, they

Below A near-contemporary sketch of the battleground on 2 July 1863, showing the view from the Union position on Little Round Top looking north-west towards the centre of the Confederate line.

Below Major-General Daniel E Sickles (1819-1914), commander of Union 3rd Corps at Gettysburg. Sickles' advance to seize high ground in front of the Union line left his corps exposed. Senior colleagues were relieved to hear that he had been carried from the battlefield with a shattered leg and his corps taken over by General Hancock. Some recent opinion has argued that Sickles' advance created a breakwater that broke the coherence and momentum of a Confederate attack that might otherwise have rolled up the Union line. Nonetheless, his performance at Gettysburg effectively ended his military career.



had to turn back. This involved a long, time-consuming loop for troops already weary, as the precious daylight passed.

Lee joined Longstreet as he approached the start-line, and then rode off to check that Anderson was ready to attack, supporting Longstreet's left flank.

As his troops were getting into position on the Confederate right, at around 3pm, McLaws reported to Longstreet that, instead of an open Union flank, he was facing a position bristling with troops and guns. Three times Longstreet sent orders to attack immediately. Faced with the hopelessness of an isolated frontal assault, McLaws twice sent messages asking Longstreet's permission to wait until Hood's division was ready and a Confederate bombardment had softened up the enemy position. On receiving the third order, McLaws replied that they would go 'within five minutes' on this desperate endeavour. Just then, an order arrived to wait.

Delay and reappraisal

Lee had just arrived at Longstreet's HQ and seen that the enemy position was completely different from what had been reported that morning. Meanwhile, on





Above A dead Confederate soldier in the Devil's Den photographed after the battle.

Right The attack on the Devil's Den and Little Round Top, early afternoon, 2 July 1863.

the far right, General Hood had made a reconnaissance that appeared to indicate that two hills to his front, Round Top and Little Round Top, were unoccupied. Moreover, the enemy's rear echelon was visible beyond. Hood therefore asked to be allowed to move even further right, so as to send a brigade looping right round the Union left.

Lee refused permission for that – his line was already too long and the broken ground made co-ordination hard enough – but he did order Hood to shift his position and axis of advance to hit the enemy's left, instead of making a frontal assault, and order McLaws to delay his attack until Hood's was under way. He also sent instructions to Anderson to wait for McLaws' last brigade before attacking. Beyond Anderson, General Pender's division would come in last.

This converted the assault into an echelon attack, starting on the enemy's left to the south, with four divisions in line, attacking in turn. This would be easier to co-ordinate on a battlefield where trees obscured many views than a simultaneous assault; once Hood's first

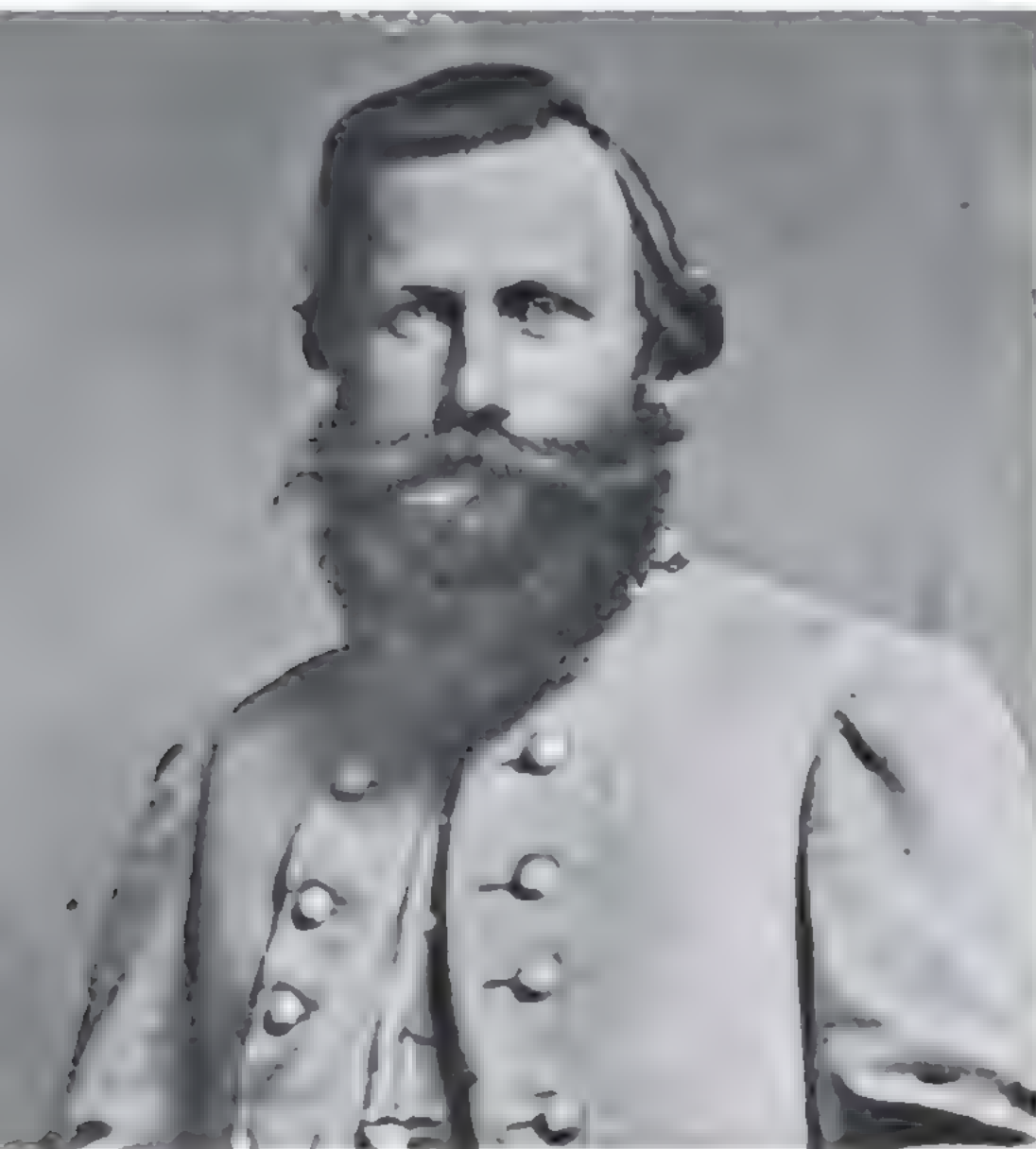


brigade attacked, each brigade (or pair of brigades, if deployed in depth) would step off after its predecessor, covering its predecessor's left. It would also allow the Confederate artillery to concentrate its fire on the enemy ahead of each successive brigade, then shift left for the next one. The aim was to suck the enemy across to his left flank, leaving the Union right on Cemetery and Culp's Hills wide open for Ewell.

The other side of the hill

Union commander General Meade had arrived on the battlefield, coincidentally, at around 3am, having ridden all night. He swiftly deployed the Union units pouring in to fill out his position – which came to be known as 'the Fishhook' – running from Culp's Hill through Cemetery Hill and then south along Cemetery Ridge.

First he reinforced 2nd Corps ►



'JEB' STUART'S RAID

Finding his planned route round the Army of the Potomac blocked, Confederate cavalry commander Lieutenant-General J E B ('Jeb') Stuart had chosen to strike further east rather than return. Out of touch with Lee, Stuart left his commanding general blind during the crucial manoeuvres before the battle and most of the engagement itself.

His troopers tore up railway lines, tore down telegraph wires, and destroyed military installations. They also found time to visit a girls' academy, where they distributed buttons and keepsakes to the enraptured young ladies. Capturing a wagon train of supplies, the division pressed on north-east, causing panic when it skirted the outskirts of Washington.

Becoming more and more exhausted as they pushed relentlessly onward across rivers and round strong Union infantry forces, they collided with a Union cavalry division at Hanover. Stuart was prevented from breaking through, choosing to withdraw rather than abandon his precious captured wagons.

Eventually one of his scouts found Lee's army after Gettysburg had begun, but his division arrived on the evening of the second day too late and with men and horses completely worn out. Lee was furious.

Left Lieutenant-General J E B Stuart (1833-1864), Lee's flamboyant commander of cavalry. His absence during a long raid around the Union army left Lee blind during the critical days of the Gettysburg campaign.

commander Hancock on Cemetery Hill. Then he and his artillery chief, Henry Hunt, moved Slocum's Corps from Cemetery Ridge onto Culp's Hill. Both positions were bolstered by additional guns from the artillery reserve. The loss of either hill would allow Confederate artillery to command the whole Union position.

As the day wore on, at the other end of the Union line, where Longstreet's two divisions were marching and counter-marching to the Confederate start-line, events had taken a curious turn. In the morning, General Dan Sickles had marched his corps into position, replacing Slocum's troops, and then complained to Meade that they were exposed, as the ground ahead was higher than Cemetery Ridge.

Sickles remembered only too well how Hooker had ordered him to abandon a crucial hilltop at the Battle of

Chancellorsville – and his corps getting pounded by the Confederate artillery who swept onto it. Furthermore, his left flank was open: General Buford, whose swift action with his cavalry division had arrested the Confederates the previous day, had been incapacitated by heatstroke and exhaustion. Buford had received permission to take his division off to recover (he sickened and eventually died), but US cavalry commander Pleasanton had failed to send any replacements to the Union far left.

After an unsatisfactory visit to HQ, Sickles ordered a unilateral advance, with drums beating, to occupy the higher ground ahead, leaving both his flanks entirely exposed. He sent forward the sharpshooters whom the Confederate high command had heard colliding with Anderson's newly arrived troops. They were driven back. Then, answering a summons to army headquarters, Sickles

was met there by General Meade, who told him to return immediately and withdraw to his original position. As if on cue, they heard the sound of guns. Longstreet's attack had started.

Hood's attack

Porter Alexander opened up with 36 Confederate guns and Hunt replied. Then General Hood called out to his division, 'Fix bayonets, my brave Texans! Forward and take those heights!'

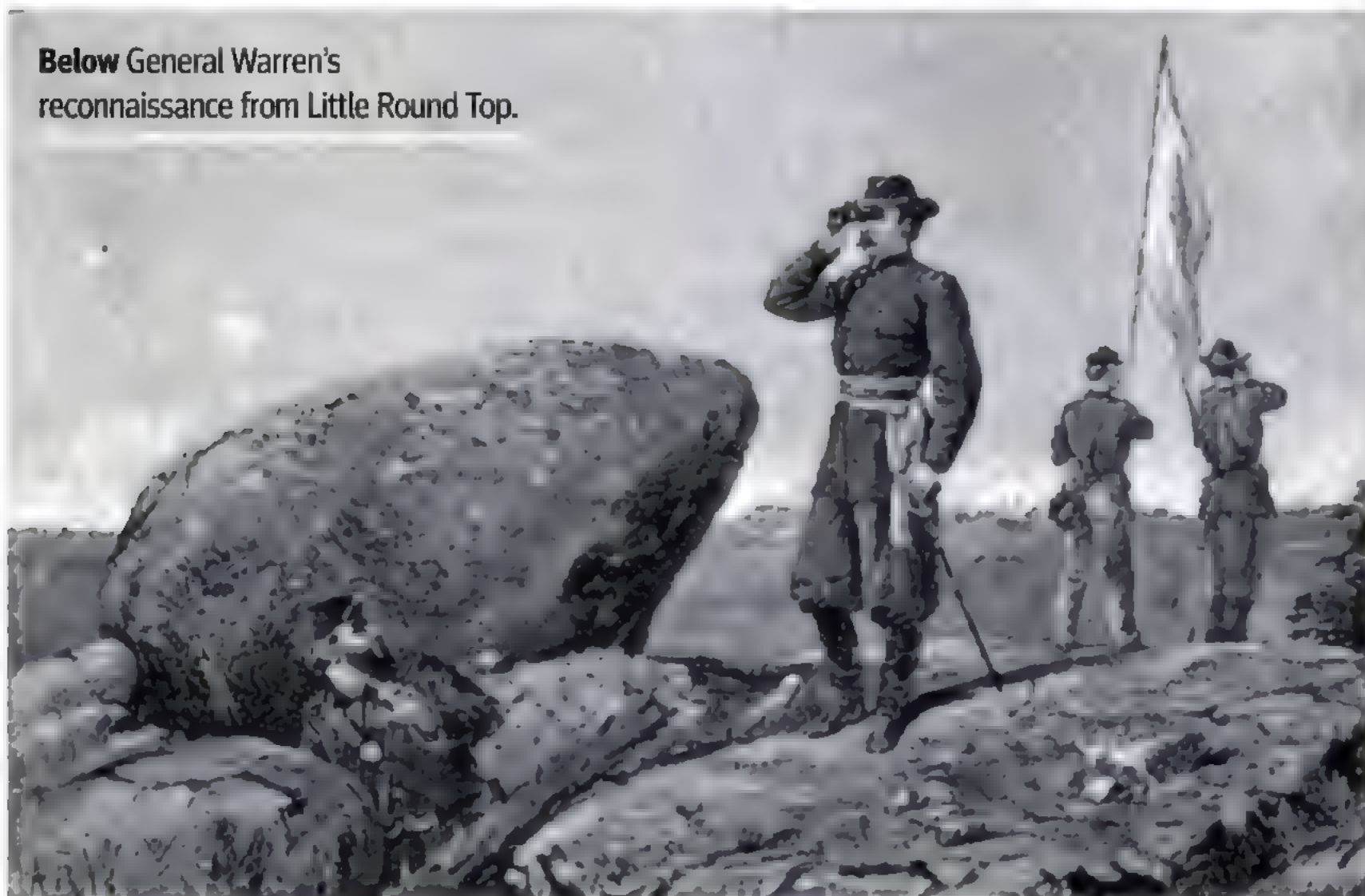
First to move was Law's brigade on the far right, which had been marching since long before dawn. One regiment, 15th Alabama, had just detached men to refill their water bottles when the order to attack arrived. The returning detail, with all the regiment's canteens, blundered into a Union-held wood and were captured, leaving their comrades desperately thirsty as they advanced into battle under the blistering sun.

Two regiments, under Colonel Oates, got onto Round Top and, spying Little Round Top ahead and empty, saw a glorious opportunity for a breakthrough. But, with soldiers of the 15th fainting with thirst, Oates ordered a short rest.

Meanwhile, a shell burst hit and wounded General Hood, so that Law was recalled to command the division, and coordination with the northern half of the brigade disintegrated. It veered left along the Plum Run Valley as Benning's brigade assaulted the pile of boulders known as Devil's Den, and Robertson and Tige Anderson's brigades hammered into Rose's Woods and Houck's Ridge – the southern end of the heights that had tempted Sickles to move forward.

The whole arc, from the base of Little

Below General Warren's reconnaissance from Little Round Top.



Round Top, through the boulders of Devil's Den, to the approach to Houck's ridge, was resounding with shots and smoke as Hood's four brigades struggled uphill against a larger – and fast-growing – Union force.

At Devil's Den, a battery of guns blazed from within the strong Union infantry position. As men battled hand to hand in the heat, the stream that ran past, Plum Run, turned red as it choked with corpses. Nevertheless, Benning's Texans closed in on the rocks and captured them. To their left, Robertson's brigade battled towards Hauck's Ridge. Robertson reported, 'As fast as we would break one line of the enemy, another fresh one would present itself ...'

Then a battery of Confederate artillery appeared, Robertson's men manhandled its guns through the woods right up to the fight, and they began blasting the Union position. The Confederates surged up and over the ridge and secured it, though they were blocked from further advance by the arrival of two more Union brigades.

Chamberlain and the 20th Maine

In the meantime, Meade had sent Sykes' 5th Corps hurrying south to reinforce his threatened left, and his chief engineer, General Warren, to observe the situation on the far left. Warren, seeing the danger, diverted the first reinforcements, Vincent's brigade, onto Little Round Top. The Union men reached the position a few minutes ahead of Oates' two weary Alabama regiments.

Three more Confederate regiments now swung right to attack the west face of Little Round Top, but by then another Union brigade had arrived on the hill.

The stage was now set for the birth of an American legend. While three regiments threw themselves repeatedly at the west face of Little Round Top, Oates' two Alabama regiments put down a withering fire against the south side, killing many of the defenders, and then stormed towards the Union position.

But their desperate assault was stopped a few yards short by Colonel Joshua Chamberlain's 20th Maine. Soon after, running short of ammunition, Chamberlain ordered his men to fix bayonets and charge. They swept Oates' thirsty Alabamians away. The Union left had been held, and Chamberlain, a New England college professor with strong abolitionist convictions, had become a Union hero.

Hood's men had not achieved a decisive breakthrough, but they had inflicted far heavier casualties than they



Above Confederate dead on the slopes of Little Round Top, photographed after the battle.

had taken and – crucially – halting their advance had sucked across more than twice their number of Federal troops.

McLaws' attack

Meade gave orders to his cavalry commander, Pleasanton, to gather up his troopers and any uncommitted reserve artillery and take up a position ready to cover a general withdrawal, should that prove necessary. On the Confederate side, seeing the emerging opportunity, Porter advanced his guns, in a charge of his own, forward to the Emmitsburg Road to give close support to the infantry.

Next in line, McLaw's division went in. Shortly before 6pm, Kershaw's brigade punched through a Z-bend in the Union line. Barksdale's four regiments poured through the gap, their commander ahead of his troops. They first encountered the plucky Pennsylvanians of Graham's Brigade, who met them with a counter charge, in which Graham and two-thirds of his men went down. Barksdale went on to shatter 13 Union regiments and four Union batteries, capturing nine guns.

The Union's deputy artillery commander, McGilvery, arrived to find that Barksdale was close to breaking through at a place where Cemetery Ridge had been completely stripped of defenders by Sickles in his efforts to block Hood. Finding only a single battery, the 9th Massachusetts, in the Mississippians' way, he ordered its commander to '... hold your position as long as possible at all hazards ...' ▶

THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN: A GRAPHIC HISTORY

A graphic history of the famous campaign of June-July 1862 is available from website Pentagoet SA (www.pentagoetsa.com), in the form of maps, diagrams and photographs – providing an excellent visual context for anyone hoping to fully understand the action. A detailed order of battle and a series of animated strategic maps place the user right in the heart of the battle, while the in-depth biographies of senior officers offer an insight into the minds behind the movement.

The information is viewable through your web browser, and individual tabs make it easy to navigate between the different information. A 'General Information' section offers information on everything from weapons used to operations and tactics employed, while the 'History' pages depict the economic and political context, the battle itself, and the long-term consequences.

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The battery quick-fired all its canister, then double-shotted its cannon with shells whose fuses had been cut short, meantime managing to fall back a quarter of a mile, firing as the horses dragged the guns. They were overrun, but they had bought the Union almost half an hour.

The Wheatfield

Encouraged by this, on Barksdale's right, Tige Anderson made another push, advancing into a wheatfield, against a superior Union force. But he was held up by a brave counter-attack by the 17th Maine, acting alone. Then the Confederate advance was halted altogether as four fresh Union brigades, under Caldwell from Hancock's 2nd Corps, emerged to join the fight.

Having committed the whole of 5th Corps from his right to reinforcing Sickles's 3rd Corps on his left, Meade was now stripping his centre. These fresh brigades pushed the remains of the two Confederate brigades, with Barksdale mortally wounded, back out of the Wheatfield.

In the meantime Sickles had been struck by a cannonball, crushing one of his legs. His soldiers cheered as, game to the end, from the stretcher bearing him to the field hospital, he puffed a cigar and waved it about. Nevertheless, senior officers of the Army of the Potomac were profoundly relieved when they heard he had gone and that Meade had given Hancock command of 3rd Corps as well as his own. Hancock gripped the disorganised remains of 3rd Corps as reinforcements poured in.

Longstreet arrived with his last two brigades; back to normal form, he was 'personally leading the attack with splendid effect. His fine horsemanship ... and martial figure ... were most inspiring.'

They drove out the brigade to the right of Caldwell's division and hammered his flank. As Caldwell's force disintegrated, General Ayres arrived with Meade's only two elite brigades of US Army Regulars. They were caught in the open in the Wheatfield, as Caldwell's division disintegrated around them, and Ayres, perhaps suffering from sunstroke, gave them the extraordinary order to form ranks about turn and retire.

They did so, initially with perfect discipline as the Confederates shredded them, and then the remnant fled, having suffered 40% casualties.

Meanwhile, General Sedgwick, commanding the Union 6th Corps – the



Above American Civil War battle involved countless close-quarters exchanges of massed musketry. A long succession of ferocious fire-fights of the kind depicted here rolled along the opposing lines from noon until nightfall on the second day of Gettysburg.

largest in the army – was arriving on the battlefield. He had started his men moving at 10pm the previous night and marched them 35 miles since; with few halts – but the blessing of buckets of water placed on the roadside by local civilians – the men of 6th Corps were exhausted. Nonetheless, they appeared just as Cardwell and Ayres disintegrated, and Meade threw them into action, their leading brigades blocking further advance by Longstreet.

Wilcox' attack

The sun was low now, red in the drifting smoke. Beyond the ground they had captured, the Confederates could see the main Union line, Cemetery Ridge, looming ahead. The remains of Longstreet's eight brigades were fought out, but they had engaged and driven back well over twice their number, and Meade had stripped the rest of his line almost bare, putting in reinforcements behind them.

Lee had another five divisions to go in, two as part of this attack and three under Ewell, north of Gettysburg. It was now time for Hill's two available divisions, Richard Anderson's and Pender's, to join the assault.

The most vulnerable point in an echelon assault is the corps boundary, especially here, as Hill was ill and Anderson was brave and popular but sometimes lethargic. Nevertheless, Lee had personally briefed Wilcox, Anderson's right-hand brigade commander, and Wilcox was already moving forward, before McLaw's division had spent itself.

He tacked left to get into dead ground on his way to assault Carr's brigade, which was deployed on the Emmitsburg Road, supported by two batteries. Lang's small Florida brigade came up fast on Wilcox's left and Carr's position was already flanked by the remains of McLaw's division on the right. Carr fought gallantly, but Wilcox and Lang swept him away, Lang commenting he had never, '... seen anywhere before where the dead lay thicker than where the Yankee infantry attempted to make a stand ...'

As Carr's brigade disintegrated, Wilcox captured four guns and he and Lang swept onward.

Frantically moving troops to block successive Confederate incursions, Union 2nd Corps commander Hancock saw through the thickening smoke what he took to be some retreating Unionists and rode over to rally them, only to face a volley of shots from Wilcox' Alabamians, wounding his aide.

Racing back, he found only a regular artillery battery and a 270-strong regiment, Minnesota's only unit on the field, and exclaimed, 'My God! Are these all the men we have here? What regiment is this?' Seeing a flag, he ordered, 'Advance, Colonel, and take those colours!'

They charged, in the face of a Confederate volley, and penetrated the grey line, two-thirds of them, including their colonel, becoming casualties. They did not capture the colours, but as other Union units closed in, Wilcox' charge halted just short of Cemetery Ridge.

Wright's attack

Next in line was Wright's Georgia brigade. They moved forward on Lang's left towards two isolated Union regiments on the Emmitsburg Road, supported by two batteries. As he approached them, Wright noticed that the next brigade in line, Posey's, was not moving up on his left – in fact, it was nowhere to be seen. He sent a message back to Anderson, who informed him that Posey had orders to advance.

Wright attacked across the road, sweeping away the Unionists and capturing five guns. This was near the point where the road passed over Cemetery Ridge.

In front of them now were some Union guns and parts of two Union brigades behind a low brick wall, but to their south was an empty section of the ridge that had been vacated by Caldwell's division when it moved further south to reinforce the line against Longstreet's advance.

Under heavy fire and across smoke-obscured ground, Wright headed straight for the gap. The Union artillery beat a hasty retreat, leaving one gun behind, but, from behind their wall, the Union infantry put down a punishing fire and most of Wright's brigade was stopped at the wall. One regiment, the 22nd Georgia, passed into the gap and onto Cemetery Ridge. From the south, a single regiment, the 13th Vermont, raced across to cut them off.

Meanwhile, to the south, the dominance of more than 30 brigades – almost two-thirds of the Union army – against ten was beginning to show. With their leader dead, the remnant of Barksdale's brigade fell back. Wilcox, his right flank exposed to strong Union pressure and the scrappy Minnesota regiment worrying his front, had to withdraw. Lang followed. As support on their right flank fell away, and with no sign of support arriving on their left, Wright found himself in danger of encirclement and reluctantly fell back.

Balance of forces

By this point in the battle, Meade had committed almost every single brigade of the five Union corps that had not been engaged on the previous day – against a total of just 11 Confederate brigades in action against his left. That left the 'Flying Dutchmen' of 11th Corps, who had been routed with 50% casualties the day before and were on Cemetery Hill, Greene's brigade, even further away on Culp's Hill, and the remnants of 1st Corps – barely 2,000 men out of yesterday's 7,000 – in deep reserve.

On hand were just two small brigades commanded by Smyth and Carroll, totalling between them 1,500 men.

Against this, the Confederates had six more brigades from Anderson's and Pender's division due to go in against Cemetery Ridge and the whole of Ewell's Corps, another 12 brigades, ready to attack Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill.

Wright had sent further messages back to General Anderson about the failure of Posey to advance on his left flank. One of his messengers later recalled that Anderson and his staff were sitting idly under the trees. Earlier, Posey had sent some men forward to clear a detachment from Smyth's brigade, occupying a farmyard in front of his position, and more had drifted over to join in the fun. One regiment had stepped off with Wright, so, when the time came, Posey could not find his brigade.

Anderson sent a message to Mahone, next in line, to advance, but the eccentric West Pointer refused to do so, citing Anderson's orders to wait for Posey, despite the officer's remark that he

had just come from Anderson.

To Lee, looking over the field, it all seemed to be going well. Through the smoke he could see the Unionists shifting most of their troops south and a gaping gap appearing ahead. As Wright reached the summit, the skirmishers from Pender's division on Lee's left advanced.

But Pender was puzzled by Mahone sitting tight and left his main force at the start-line, as he rode over to see what had happened. On the way, a shell exploded above, mortally wounding him. By the time his HQ realised what had happened and had found the senior brigade commander, Lane, it was getting dark. Looking into the thick smoke rolling through the trees in the dusk and hearing the sounds of battle to his right subsiding, Lane decided it was too late to attack.

By then, sounds from the left flank had started. Ewell's corps was going in at last, in the smoke-filled dusk, attacking Cemetery and Culp's Hills. Both by now had been stripped of most of their infantry, as Meade reinforced his left and centre.' ❧

To be continued

Below The attack on the Emmitsburg Road and Cemetery Ridge, late afternoon, 2 July 1863.





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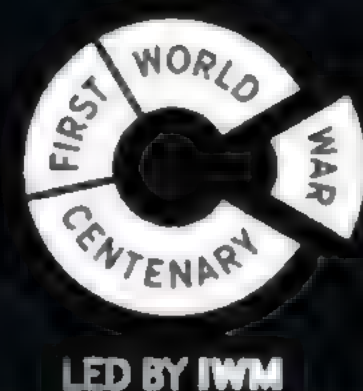
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THE ELEFANT

Eric Bryan examines one of the most fearsome machines of the Second World War.



Above A destroyed Elephant being inspected by Russian soldiers.

Germany's advanced WWII war machinery included intercontinental ballistic missiles (the V-2), rocket planes (the Me 163 Komet), and jet fighters (the Me 262). The Wehrmacht was no less determined to attain ground superiority, and with its armour it likewise reached for the most powerful and advanced designs.

Surely one of the most fearsome machines of the war was the Elephant, a *schwerer Panzerjäger*, or heavy tank hunter/destroyer. The Elephant began its production life in 1943 as the Ferdinand, named after Ferdinand Porsche. When Porsche was left with over 90 spare chassis from his rejected Tiger tank proposal, the company opted to utilise them as the foundation for a new heavy tank hunter. Porsche began sketching plans for the machine in 1942.

Design, power plant, and armament

The Ferdinand used petrol-electric power via two centrally placed 296 horsepower Maybach engines. The engines ran electric generators that powered drive motors linked to the rear sprocket wheels. The placement of the engines necessitated an internal arrangement in which the radioman and driver were situated separately in the front, only able to communicate with the rest of the crew by intercom.

The central power plant allowed space for the mounting of the 88mm Pak 43/2

L/71 antitank gun toward the rear. The Ferdinand had no rotating turret, but instead a large box-like compartment positioned at the rear, to which the massive gun was mounted in the casemate manner. The gun had a limited 25-degree range of lateral and vertical adjustment. With this long-range armament, the Ferdinand was designed to destroy enemy tanks before the latter could get within

their own firing range. With front armour almost eight inches (203mm) thick, the Ferdinand weighed in at 65 tonnes.

Eighty-nine Ferdinands saw service in the Battle of Kursk. The 653rd Heavy Tank Destroyer Battalion claimed 13 Ferdinand losses against the knocking out of 320 Russian tanks. It was reported that the Ferdinand could destroy or immobilise a T-34 tank from over three miles away. But the vulnerabilities of the design soon became apparent. The Ferdinand had no machine-gun to deter infantry attacks, and its weight contributed to mechanical breakdowns.

Second phase: the upgrade

Following the proving ground of the Battle of Kursk, the remaining Ferdinands were temporarily withdrawn from service for revamping. In late 1943, 48 Ferdinands were each fitted with an anti-infantry ball-mounted MG-34, anti-magnetic Zimmerit paste (a hull texturing to prevent the attachment of magnetic mines), and a commander's cupola, which provided better visibility. These additions, plus some extra armour, increased the weight of the machine to 70 tonnes (second in weight only to the Jagdtiger tank destroyer). The improved and beefed-up Ferdinands were nicknamed Elefants, and a

May Day 1944 order from Hitler made the new moniker official.

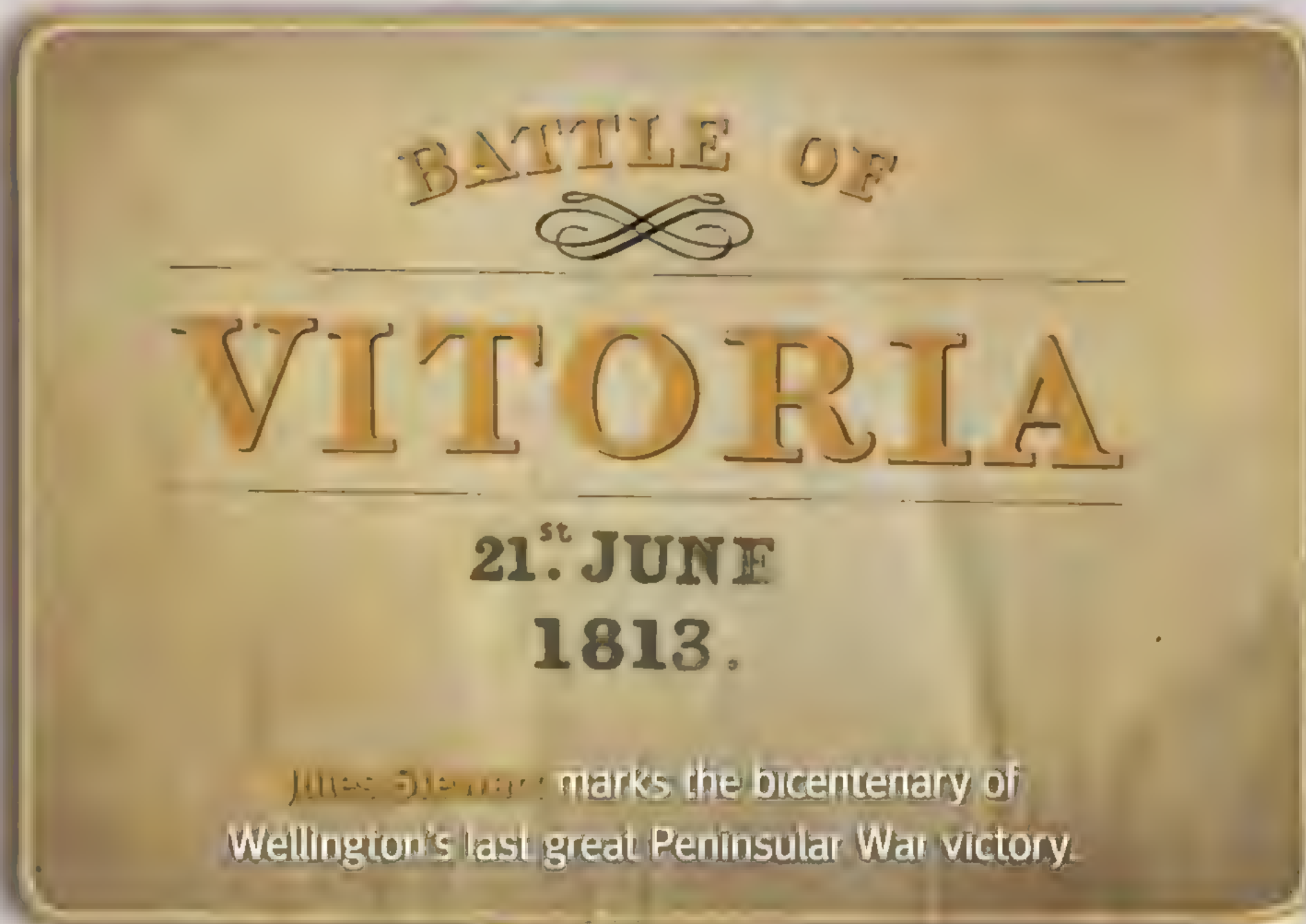
These Elefants saw action on the Italian front, in Zossen during the Battle of Berlin, and in the Soviet's Vistula-Order offensive. Due to the Elephant's long-range firepower and heavy armour, few were destroyed by enemy fire. But the machine's vulnerabilities were several: its weight, which made negotiating bridges and some roads hazardous; a general mechanical unreliability; and the lack of available spare parts, which led to many Elefants being abandoned after breakdowns.

The Ferdinands and Elefants were also slow and unmanoeuvrable. The lack of a rotating turret meant the whole machine was rendered virtually helpless when a track or drive sprocket was broken, either due to mechanical failure or enemy fire.

However, with an average kills-per-loss ratio of 10:1, the Ferdinand and Elephant could be considered the war's most effective tank destroyer. Two examples of this imposing piece of armour remain. A Ferdinand seized by the Soviets during the Battle of Kursk is on display at the Kubinka Tank Museum on the outskirts of Moscow. United States forces captured an Elephant in Anzio, Italy, and this machine is in the United States Army Ordnance Museum in Fort Lee, Virginia. ■■

Below A Ferdinand on display at Kubinka Tank Museum, outside Moscow. Note the absence of a front-mounted machine gun, which was an Elephant modification.





Scale of Miles

Main image A near-contemporary plan of the Battle of Vitoria showing the positions of the main forces at the start of the battle.

Below Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, whose installation as King of Spain in 1807 turned the country into a French protectorate and triggered a national insurrection. The Spanish dubbed him *Pepe Botella* – a reference to his fondness for the bottle – and later named a popular brand of sherry after him.



Napoleon must have experienced a sharp pain in his 'Spanish ulcer' the day in 1813 he learnt that Ludwig van Beethoven had composed a symphony to celebrate the rout of the French army at Vitoria, an obscure town in the Spanish Basque Country. Even more vexing for the erstwhile master of Europe surely was the official title given to this 15-minute orchestral work: Wellingtons Sieg oder die Schlacht bei Vittoria – 'Wellington's Victory, or the Battle of Vitoria'.

The composition was completed within four months of the battle and performed in December 1813 to an enthusiastic Viennese audience. Beethoven, incidentally, had already expressed his disgust with Napoleon in 1804 – when the French leader had proclaimed himself emperor – by tearing up the title sheet of his Third Symphony, which he had dedicated to Bonaparte, and changing its name to *Eroica*.

For the citizens of Vienna, it was symbolic of Napoleon's vulnerability

after 20 years of warfare across Europe. The emperor himself had good cause to be upset: his brother Joseph's defeat at Vitoria on 21 June 1813 had cost him the Peninsular War, the conflict he dubbed his 'Spanish ulcer' and which in his memoirs he described as central to his ultimate downfall. 'That unfortunate war destroyed me. All my disasters are bound up in that fatal knot.'

The Spanish insurrection

Vitoria represented the final act in a conflict that had its origins in the proclamation of the First French Republic in 1792. From that date onwards, Britain and France were locked in a power play for primacy in Europe. The Royal Navy might have ruled the seas, but Napoleon's armies held sway over most of continental Europe's land



Images: © Arms Museum – Diputación Foral de Álava – Quintas Fotografías unless otherwise stated.



mass. One annoying exception was Portugal, Britain's oldest European ally, which refused to take part in the sea blockade decreed by Napoleon.

In 1807, on the excuse of punishing the recalcitrant Portuguese, and with Spanish complicity, a French army of 20,000 men under General Jean-Andoche Junot marched across Spain to occupy Portugal. The declared aim was to close the harbours of Portugal to British ships. But in short order Napoleon turned his covetous gaze to his Spanish ally, forcing the abdication of Carlos IV in favour of his son Fernando VII, who in turn was obliged to cede the throne to Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte as King Joseph I of Spain.

Joseph became something of a quasi-comic figure to the Spaniards, who dubbed him *Pepe Botella*, 'pepe' being the diminutive of José and 'botella' the word for bottle. This was an allusion to the king's excessive drinking, which was based mostly on fanciful rumour. (It did, however, give rise to a popular brand of

sherry, Tío Pepe, or 'Uncle Pepe'.)

On 2 May 1808, the people of Madrid rose in revolt against the French, and when the insurrection was drowned in blood by Marshal Joachim Murat, rebellion broke out across Spain.

King Joseph abandoned Madrid and withdrew beyond the Ebro River in July after the Spanish captured a French force sent to seize Seville. Another French force was repulsed at Zaragoza, while a few weeks later, in August 1808, Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, landed at Portugal at the head of a British expeditionary force and defeated Major-General

Right The French Army enters Vitoria. The little Basque town was under French occupation from 1807 to 1813. Local opinion was mixed.

That unfortunate war destroyed me. All my disasters are bound up in that fatal knot.

Napoleon



VITORIA, 1813

Jean Andoche Junot at Vimeiro. With Moore as commander-in-chief, the British then crossed the Spanish border.

An infuriated Napoleon hastened to Spain with more than 200,000 troops, stormed Madrid, laid siege to Zaragoza, and went in pursuit of Moore, who had retreated into Galicia. The Peninsular War – known in Spain as the ‘War of Independence’ – had exploded in all its fury.

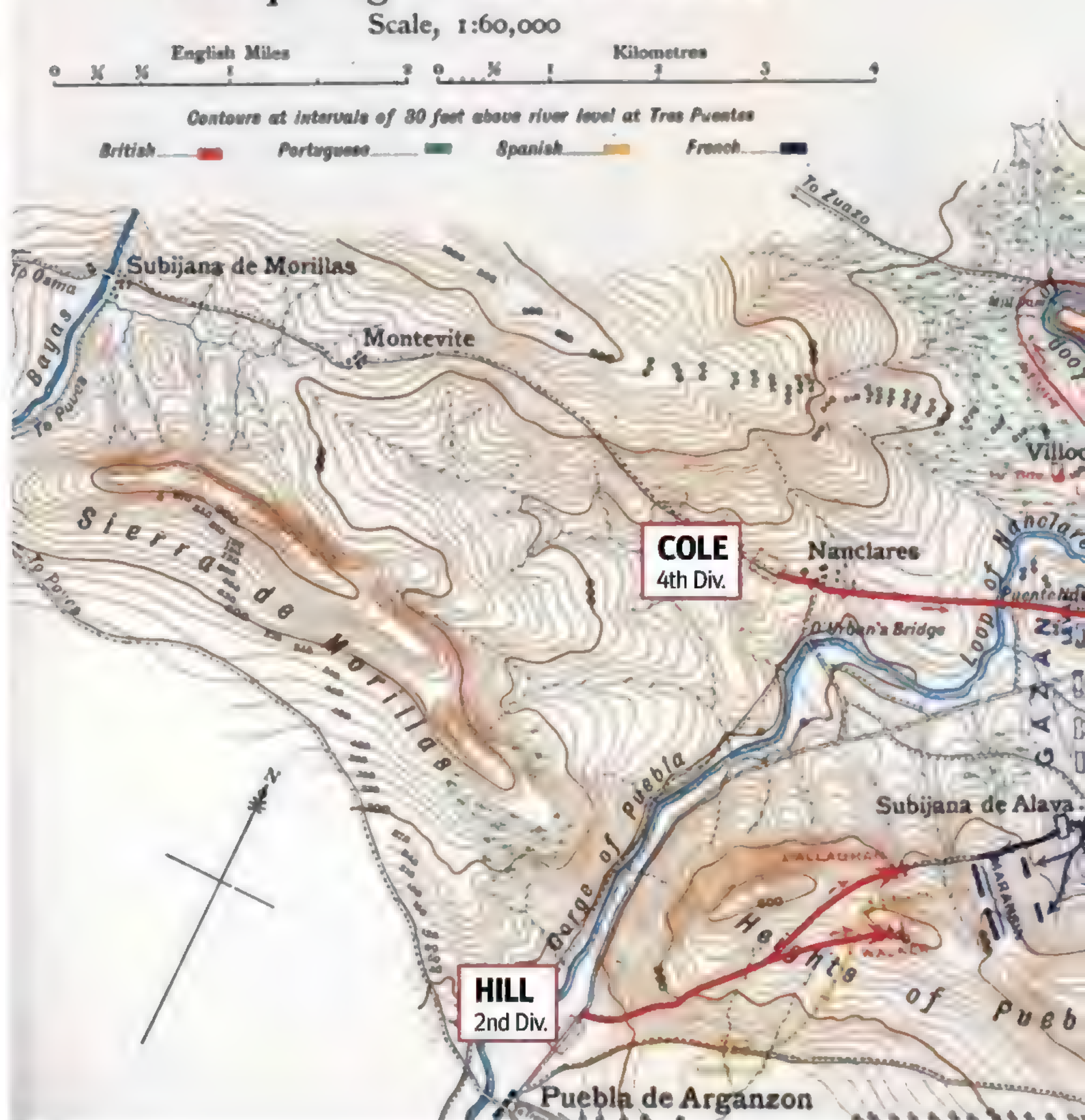
The road to Vitoria

The struggle ebbed and flowed for five years. From their secure Portuguese base, the British mounted further invasions of Spain – in 1809, 1811, and 1812 – but each time they lacked the strategic weight to drive the French from the Peninsula. The campaign – conducted by Wellington as commander-in-chief after Moore’s death at Coruña – was, however, a masterpiece of offensive-defensive generalship, and his Peninsular army became a force of experienced, battle-hardened veterans of the highest quality.

Only in 1813, as Napoleon’s empire began to unravel in the wake of his disastrous Russian campaign, did the possibility of outright victory in the Peninsula arise. That year, when Wellington went on the offensive, his sights were set on the enemy’s last major stronghold in northern Spain.

Vitoria in 1813 was a town of some 6,500 inhabitants, a typical Basque agricultural community whose strategic importance was totally at variance with its size. The town is the junction of five roads, the most important being the one linking Madrid to Irún on the French border.

VITORIA June 21, 1813 The opening of the British attack



Above The Battle of Vitoria, 21 June 1813. French deployment was careless, allowing Wellington to mount an effective converging attack from both north (under Picton, Dalhousie, and Graham) and west (Hill, Cole, and Wellington himself) with superior numbers. The battle was long and hard-fought, but the French were finally broken by the weight of fire brought against them. The French lost 8,000 men, the Allies 5,000.

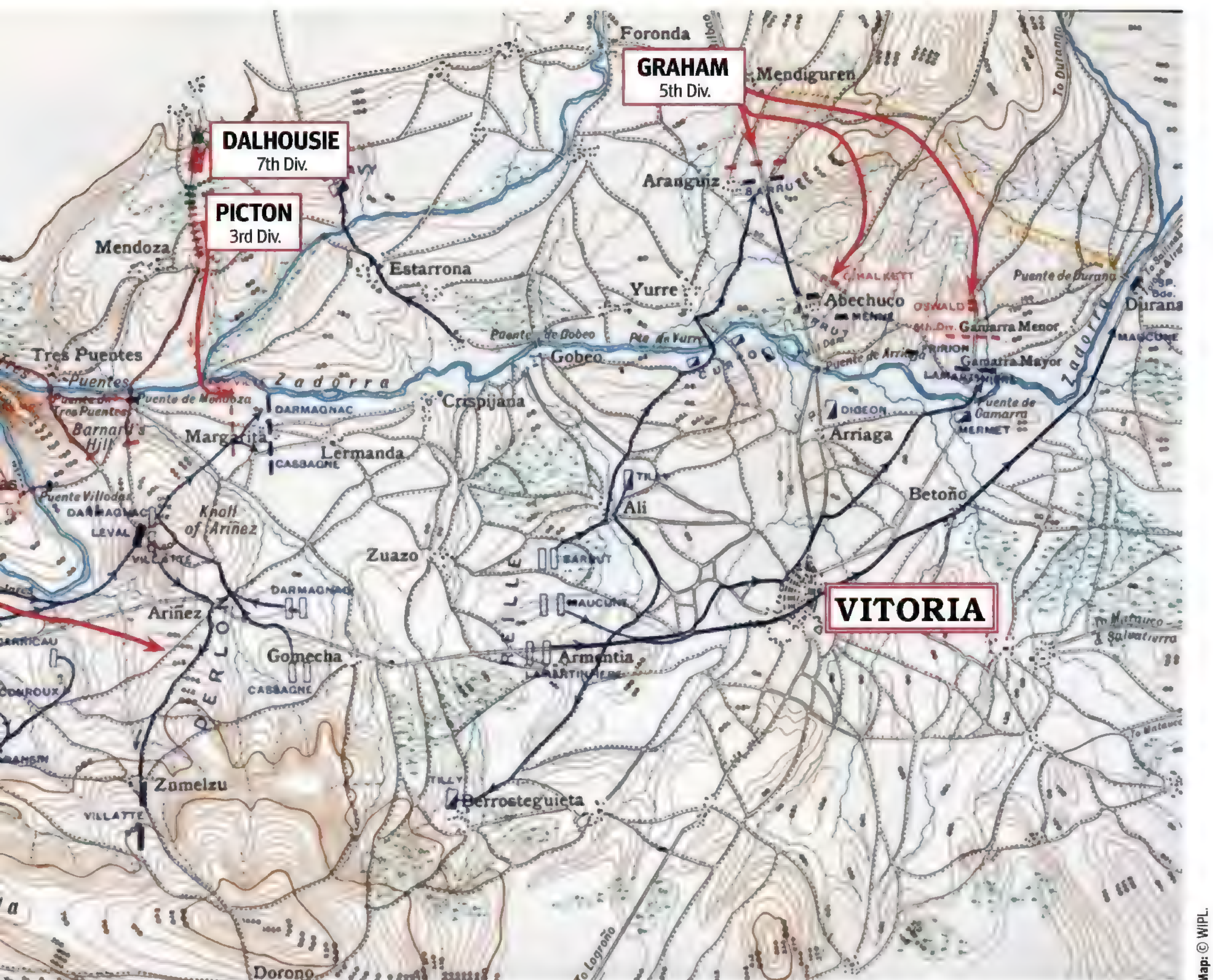
Below The Plaza Mayor, the main square, in Vitoria, as depicted in a 19th-century print.



In June, King Joseph I and his army were being chased by Wellington’s Allied force of British, Spanish, and Portuguese troops. Joseph had been forced to abandon Madrid after his defeat at Salamanca in July 1812. In May of the following year, Wellington had launched 120,000 troops in pursuit of the French army, which was pushed successively northwards, falling back from Valladolid to Palencia and Burgos.

Joseph I and his chief-of-staff, Marshal Jean Baptiste Jourdan, decided to end their retreat and make a stand at Vitoria, which had been under French occupation since 1807. On 13 June 1813, tens of thousands of French troops began streaming into the broad plain of Vitoria, with two of Wellington’s three columns closing in to cut off their escape route to

Image: © Zumalakarregi Museum (Ormaiztegui, Gipuzkoa)



Map: © WIPL

France. The forthcoming battle would decide the independence of Spain.

The battlefield

For the people of Vitoria, life under the French had brought six years of mixed fortunes. King Joseph had instituted a number of social and legal reforms, including an overhaul of the archaic tax structure, so that the great landed families were obliged to pay more on their properties. The benefits of the Enlightenment were seen in initiatives such as the creation of public libraries in Vitoria and a widespread vaccination programme.

An entire class of collaborators, mainly members of the nobility and bureaucracy, known pejoratively as *afrancesados* ('the Frenchified'), flourished under Joseph's rule. But the humbler class of citizens – farmers, shopkeepers, labourers – fared less well. The burden of feeding and housing a large army of occupation reduced the town's population by nearly half in the years of foreign rule, with many

emigrating or dying of sheer starvation.

Vitoria lies at the eastern end of an oval-shaped plain measuring about eight miles by four. The plain is almost enclosed by hills, rising at most some 1,600 feet above the gently rolling fields.

No information reached us which suggested an immediate attack.

Marshal Jourdan

On 20 June, Wellington was approaching the town at the head of 75,000 troops, of whom about 10% were Spanish. He faced a smaller French force of around 57,000, though Joseph I and his generals anticipated an improvement in the odds with the arrival of 15,000 reinforcements under Marshal Bertrand Chausel. Wellington could count on a

staff composed of some of the British Army's most experienced officers, almost all of whom had taken part in previous Peninsular campaigns.

Wellington's generals

General Rowland Hill, one of the most battle-seasoned senior British officers, was given command of the Right Column. Hill had led a brigade at Roliça and Vimeiro in Portugal and at La Coruña in Spain. He had been instrumental in routing Marshal Nicolas Soult's corps from Oporto before the Allied invasion of Spain. Hill had also taken part in the Badajoz campaign, and had fought at Talavera, where he was briefly grabbed and nearly captured by a French trooper.

General Galbraith Lowry Cole was another who led from the front. He commanded the 4th Division and played a decisive role at the Battle of Albuera, where he was wounded, as he was more seriously at Salamanca.

Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton was respected for his courage and feared

VITORIA, 1813



Above General Miguel Ricardo de Álava (1770-1843) served as an aide to Wellington at Vitoria. A native of the town, he had first supported the French, but switched sides in 1808. He was to have the curious distinction of serving at both Trafalgar and Waterloo, though on opposite sides on each occasion – a living embodiment of the shifting allegiances of a revolutionary epoch.

for his irascible temperament. Picton was given command of the 3rd Division, considered the army's finest. The 3rd could be relied on to hold their ground under the most devastating fire, reflected in the fact that they took more than a third of all Allied losses in the battle.

General Thomas Graham commanded the Left Column and served as Wellington's second-in-command. Graham had joined the campaign after returning from Scotland, where he was convalescing from an eye ailment. He was put at the head of the 5th Division and his Left Column proved instrumental in intercepting the French retreat on the road to Bayonne.

General Sir William Beresford was

Below Marshal Jean Baptiste Jourdan (1762-1833) was one of Napoleon's finest marshals. The fact that he was ill the day before the battle and that his relationship with Joseph Bonaparte was tense contributed to French failings in the Vitoria campaign.



meant to lead the Centre Column, though Wellington in fact took personal command of this. Beresford's major Peninsular success was in raising a Portuguese army, a battalion of *caçadores*, or 'hunters'.

General Sir George Ramsay commanded the 7th Division, which took up the centre-left position alongside Wellington's Centre Column. Ramsay was an exception on the senior staff in that he was practically a newcomer to the Peninsular War. Nonetheless, he was to distinguish himself in the Pyrenees action following the battle.

The Spanish and the Portuguese

The two Spanish contingents occupied wing positions under Generals Pablo Morillo and Francisco de Longa. Morillo was a veteran campaigner of Trafalgar vintage, who had been promoted to brigadier at the age of 36, two years after Vitoria would become a field-marshal.

All right, you
wanted a battle,
and here you
have it – lost!

Marshal Jourdan

De Longa had joined the guerrilla forces fighting the French in the wake of the 1808 uprising. By 1811, at the age of 28, he had risen to lieutenant-colonel. His irregulars were incorporated into the Spanish Army the year before Vitoria.

One of the most illustrious names associated with the battle, if not with the entire Peninsular War, was that of General Miguel Ricardo de Álava, who happened to be a native of Vitoria. Álava came from one of the city's most distinguished families, and the early years of his military career marked him as anything but a British ally. He fought against Britain in the Philippines in 1799, was held prisoner for a year, was later wounded fighting the British at Trafalgar, and finally became a firm supporter of Joseph I when the French marched into Vitoria.

It was Napoleon's overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty that opened Álava's eyes to the French invaders' real intentions. A few weeks after Joseph's enthronement, Álava slipped out of

Vitoria to join the Spanish rebels in Madrid. During the next five years he took part in most major battles, and in 1812, on Wellington's personal recommendation, he was promoted to field-marshal.

While British and Spanish troops made up the bulk of the Allied forces, they were not alone. Apart from the Portuguese, Wellington had under his command the King's German Legion and French royalists of Ramsay's 7th Division's Chasseurs Britanniques.

Joseph's generals

King Joseph was also surrounded by a staff of seasoned Peninsular campaigners. General Honoré Reille led two divisions of the Army of Portugal, whose loyalty was as doubtful as that of Joseph's Spanish troops. Reille was the only French general who could hold his head high after the battle, having covered his comrade General Jean-Baptiste Drouet's orderly retreat to Pamplona. Drouet commanded the Centre Column at Vitoria with exemplary skill, unlike General Honoré Gazan, who, despite his battlefield experience, performed poorly.

Joseph's chief-of-staff, Marshal Jean Baptiste Jourdan, was a veteran of the American War of Independence, as well as almost every major battle of Revolutionary and Imperial France. Joseph appointed him commander-in-chief in Spain in 1808, at a time when rebellion was rampant throughout the country.

A sensible soldier as well as a consummate professional, Jourdan would oppose fighting a rearguard action after the French had abandoned Vitoria. During the retreat he would turn to Joseph to utter the words that cost him his command: 'All right, you wanted a battle and here you have it – lost!'

Wellington could consider himself fortunate that Jourdan was ill with a fever on 20 June, leaving the French virtually leaderless and without orders the day before the battle. The inexperienced Joseph had taken charge of the troop disposition in Jourdan's absence.

The morning of battle

There was no lack of activity in the Allied camp. Wellington and his generals were busy mapping out a plan for an all-out pincer attack along three fronts, to commence at first light on 21 June. Throughout the day and night before the battle, thousands of men began moving into position under a steady rain.



Above A French line crumbles under British attack. The town of Vitoria appears in the background.

Right British infantry crash into a French line during heavy fighting at Vitoria.

Wellington was confident his superiority of numbers would carry the day, so long as the enemy remained in position.

On the evening of the 19th, the mayor of a nearby town came to Wellington's camp bearing the news that Marshal Bertrand Clausel – at the head of 15,000 French troops – had reached Logroño, 30 miles to the south. To Wellington's relief, Clausel was unaware of the impending battle, and had decided to give his men a day's rest. There was now no way the column would reach Vitoria in time to reinforce Joseph's army.

Clausel, encamped at more than a day's march to the south, may have been unaware of Wellington's intentions, but it beggars belief that Jourdan, recovered from his fever on the morning of the 21st, could later claim in his diary that 'no information reached us which suggested an immediate attack'.

The eight-mile-long plain is cut diagonally by the Zadorra River, a tributary of the Ebro. Joseph drew up his 57,000 men and 80 guns in three defensive lines behind the river. The King did not forget to have stands erected in Vitoria, from which the





Above Coloured etched caricature by George Cruikshank. Following the battle, nearly all the French Army's baggage and artillery fell into British hands. The victory would have been even more conclusive had not many British soldiers abandoned the pursuit to indulge in an orgy of looting, prompting Wellington's famous remark about his army being composed of 'the scum of the earth'.

townspeople might watch him defeat Wellington. He did, however, forget to knock down the Zadorra bridges that provided access to the town. This was to be the French army's undoing on that day, which broke in a drizzling mist.

Wellington's attack

At 8am the plain was shattered by an explosion of cannon and musketry as Hill's 23,000 British, Spanish, and Portuguese troops began their advance against Jourdan's front. Twelve hours of heavy fighting, at a cost of nearly 13,000 casualties, lay ahead before the French were put to flight.

As Gazan's six divisions came under heavy bombardment, Wellington's two centre columns advanced eastward towards the river, while Dalhousie, Graham, and Picton bore down on the enemy from the north.

By early afternoon Wellington was on the point of storming one of the bridges

at the hamlet of Villodas, due west of Vitoria. At that moment, a peasant came up to him with the news that a mile to the north the bridge of Tres Puentes had been left unguarded. The Light Division was sent to follow the peasant. The bridge, crossed with some difficulty, put the troops in position to advance rapidly on Vitoria – though a round-shot took off the head of the peasant guide.

Throughout the day, and despite a spirited defence, the French positions steadily fell to the Allied forces, until Jourdan made a final stand on a north-south axis roughly equidistant from the river and Vitoria. For a time, the battle developed into an artillery duel, with some 75 guns on either side battering each other and little infantry action. By evening, however, the four French armies had been put to flight, with only the Portuguese retiring in something approaching good order.

An orgy of looting

More than two hours of daylight remained on the longest day of the year, but the Allied army had advanced some 20 miles since dawn and the men were in no mood to chase after the enemy, now fleeing in disorderly droves eastward along the Pamplona road. The Allied troops had also caught the scent of booty.

The Battle of Vitoria definitively broke the French grip on Spain, but it

also ended in one of the biggest orgies of looting in the history of warfare. In their desperate rush to escape Wellington's onslaught, the French had abandoned a cache of artworks, gold coins, silverware, and valuables worth around £1 million, as well as 170 guns, 400 wagons of ammunition, two million cartridges, and thousands of firearms.

Álava galloped up to his friend Wellington's camp to plead for the town's gates to be shut to save it from pillage. Wellington was appalled by the feral outbreak of indiscipline, prompting his celebrated comment to Earl Bathurst,

'We have in the service the scum of the earth as common soldiers.'

King Joseph had a narrow escape before the Allied pursuit was called off. The 14th Light Dragoons stopped his royal coach and, failing to recognise the distinguished passenger inside, discharged their pistols into the window. Out leapt the king on the far side, making good his escape thanks to his silver chamber-pot, which was spotted inside the coach and liberated by the troops.

In December 1813, Napoleon ordered the release of Fernando VII from his splendid incarceration at Talleyrand's Loire Valley Chateau of Valençay. This was no gesture of magnanimity on the emperor's part – Napoleon had signed a treaty with Spain that provided for the Spanish pretender's freedom in exchange for a complete cessation of hostilities.

The Spanish, however, were mistrustful of Napoleon's intentions and wanted the Allies to carry on chasing the enemy across the Pyrenees. Wellington marched his troops over the mountain passes to take the war into France. Now on the run, Soult did his best to stop the Allied advance, but to no avail. With the French soundly defeated at Toulouse in April 1814, soon followed by Napoleon's abdication, the Peninsular War was over. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jules Stewart has a special interest in 19th-century military history, especially that of Spain. His latest book is *Madrid: the History*.

We have in the
service the scum
of the earth as
common soldiers.

Wellington

REDOUBT

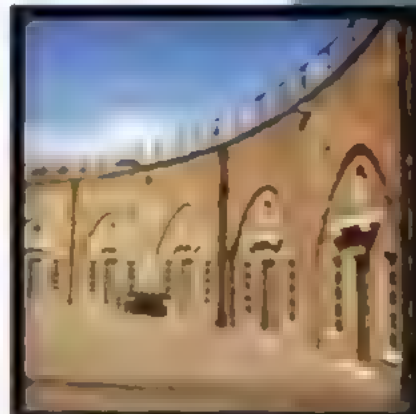
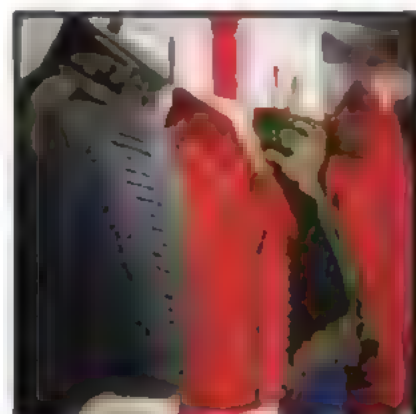
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The conference is being organised jointly by the Department of War Studies and Waterloo 200. For more information, see:

<http://www.waterloo200.org/>
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Tickets cost £40 for one day and £75 for both days, for all tickets purchased before 31 July. After this date, prices will be £50 and £90.

Student rates will be £20 for one day and £40 for two. Tickets available from King's College London: <http://estore.kcl.ac.uk/>

For further details, please contact
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Left Savile Lumley's famous poster (c. 1914-1915) for the British Parliamentary Recruiting Committee.

physical and psychological response. It is difficult for many adults to avoid becoming fascinated. It seems hopeless to expect children not to be.

PLAYING AT WAR

This issue is tackled head-on in the first of the exhibition's four themed parts. We are reminded that children's play is always essentially imitative. Children imitate that which they see around them, and also that which is depicted in pictures, books, films, TV programmes, and computer simulations. Toys are designed to provide the necessary props. Those that are not supplied commercially – or which are denied by grown-ups – can always be improvised. The War Games exhibition features a stick rifle, a stick hand-gun, and a lego hand-gun.

The academic research about the affects of this is inconclusive. The 'responsible' parents and teachers who discourage war play feel instinctively that it must foster aggression. Concerns have been heightened by the strength of liberal, feminist, and pacifist sentiment since the Second World War. But there is no hard evidence to support a link between war play and personal aggression. Children from a very early age know the difference between play and reality; they know that in play you should not cause actual harm – indeed, that if you do, play will cease and trouble ensue!

War play may actually be beneficial. It may be cathartic and educative, allowing children to explore their emotions and learn how to manage them. It may also help them understand an otherwise frighteningly violent adult world. And, like other imaginative play, it may foster a range of generic skills.

What is the alternative? Children will find ways to imitate war whatever adults do. And is not the acting out of conflict necessary both to engender an awareness of the consequences of violence and to frame a growing understanding of right and wrong? (My son routinely asks: 'Who are the goodies and who are the baddies?' Not always an easy question to answer.)

Is not war play a route into military history? And what serious student of military history can regard war as anything other than tragedy?

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

The exhibition aims to explore the role of warfare in children's play from 1800 to the present-day, and the second themed section

WAR GAMES

A new V&A Museum of Childhood exhibition is taking a radical look at children's war play. MHM Editor Neil Faulkner has just visited with two of his children.

Playing with toy guns and watching war movies encourages children to be violent. Or do they?

Many parents think it wrong to give their children military-themed toys, or to allow them to play military-themed computer games. They assume it encourages children to be aggressive and militaristic. But does it?

One of the best things about this splendid

little exhibition is that it challenges some simplistic assumptions. War is so deep-rooted in human culture that children are bound to come into contact with all manner of references to it. It is also an exceptionally dramatic and exciting form of experience, which subjects people to extremes of discomfort, endurance, and danger, evoking from them corresponding extremes of

charts chronological changes in toys, relating these to the evolving social context.

Toys have mirrored the development of weapons technology, the geography of theatres of war, and the identity and character of armies. That they should do this seems obvious. Yet the closeness of the correspondence between toys and contemporary reality has varied over time.

In the heyday of imperialism before the First World War, there is no doubt that war toys encouraged identification with European armies engaged in colonial subjugation. A detachment of miniature lead 17th Lancers, and another of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, both dating from 1900, are surely meant to be deployed against hordes of fanatical Dervishes or Pathans.

The Great War was reflected in toys replicating the growing range of military hardware being deployed by the great powers – like the German clockwork torpedo-boat on display – and by war games that invited participants to take on the role of commanders – such as 'Aviation: the aerial tactics game of attack and defence', produced in the 1920s.

The fascination with contemporary conflict continued through the interwar period and into the Second World War. A Nazi-era toy on display represents a German military field-hospital. At the time, of course, Hitler's regime was concerned both to build up the Wehrmacht in defiance of Versailles Treaty restrictions and to restore the standing of the military in German public consciousness.

The Second World War remained a focus of toy-makers in Britain – though not in Germany – long after 1945. I remember that my own and my friends' Action Men in the 1960s could be kitted out as WW2-vintage British, Australian, American, Russian, or German soldiers – even as 'French Resistance fighters'.

Toy-makers often liaised with military suppliers to ensure the accuracy of their own products. But the deeper significance of all these toys was the way in which they encouraged identification with the nation-state's armed forces and therefore with associated ideas of militarism, imperialism, nationalism, and patriotism.

Post-war colonial campaigns, on the other hand, proved uninspiring for toy-makers, and the Vietnam War, having engendered global revulsion and resistance, triggered a major shift – into a fantasy world.



Below A detachment of cardboard Prussian cuirassiers from the time of the Franco-Prussian War.

REALITY TO FANTASY

The science fiction of late 19th-century writers like Jules Verne and H G Wells had conjured images of futuristic weaponry. Wells had imagined fleets of German airships creating a firestorm in New York, and armies of Martians landing in Sussex and emerging from their spaceship mounted on metallic tripods and equipped with ray-guns. He had also, as it happens, been an early advocate of formal war-gaming, publishing a set of rules in 1913 under the title *Little Wars* (the thoroughly non-PC full title was *Little Wars: a game for boys from twelve years of age to one hundred and fifty and for that more intelligent sort of girl who likes boys' games and books*). A copy is on display.



Left Red astronaut robot 'Cragstan' of the 1950s. Science fiction as a significant genre dates from the late 19th century, but it was not until the post-war period that it gathered real momentum and in due course became the basis of numerous varieties of mass-produced toys.

Below A detachment of cardboard Prussian cuirassiers from the time of the Franco-Prussian War.

WAR CULTURE

Colonial Wars 1607-1763



FROM ABOVE CLOCKWISE

COLONIAL WARS Toy soldier set, 17th Lancers, made by Britains Ltd, England, 1900; Toy soldier set, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, made by Britains Ltd, England, 1900.

THE GREAT WAR A German clockwork torpedo-boat of c. 1912; a British wartime game 'Get Rid of Huns' produced in 1916; a British boardgame, 'Aviation: the aerial tactics game of attack and defence', based on WWI experience, produced by H P Gibson & Sons Ltd in England in the 1920s.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR Toy soldier set, German Army medical service, produced by O M Hausser and A G Lineol, c. 1936; a model Spitfire produced by Mettoy in England in the 1940s; a card game, 'England Expects: the great naval card game', produced by the Chad Valley Co. Ltd. in England in c. 1940; a plastic tank produced by Palitoy in England in the 1960s; a plastic WWII Spitfire produced by Airfix in the 1970s; a plastic WWII Lockheed Lightning produced by Airfix in the 1970s.

But the great majority of war toys mimicked reality until the 1960s. Then, anti-war sentiment seems to have produced a strong negative reaction – and a partial retreat into a fantasy world on the part of toy-makers. The Cold War was the context for this. There was no all-out war, and the numerous proxy wars that did take place were controversial 'dirty wars'. On the other hand, nuclear power and the space race gave impetus to all kinds of science fiction.

GO EXPLORE

THE V&A MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD

The V&A Museum of Childhood is on Cambridge Heath Road in London, E2 9PA – just five minutes from Bethnal Green tube. It is housed in an architecturally superb example of a Victorian civic building. It comprises a single massive open-plan interior space, divided between a cavernous central hall, and side galleries arranged on two floors. The roof structure is supported on a framework of elegant iron pillars and arches. The place is filled with natural light. Admission is free (including the War Games exhibition) and the museum is open 10am to 5.30pm daily. War Games is scheduled to run from 25 May 2012 to 9 March 2014.

The Second World War 1939-1945



The Great War 1914-1918



Superheroes, aliens, and monsters replaced soldiers in fighting fantastical battles between good and evil. Henceforward, *Dr Who*, *Star Trek*, and *Star Wars* were as likely to provide the framework for children's war-play as anything from real-life. And if not a retreat into fantasy, then there was a retreat into a more distant past: the plastic figures in the toy box in the 1970s were quite likely to be medieval knights, Civil War infantry, or 'cowboys and indians'.

SECRET WEAPONS

I was fascinated by a shiny metallic model from 1930s Germany of an SS staff car bearing none other than the Führer himself. When I pointed the figure out, there was instant recognition from both 12-year-old daughter and nine-year-old son.

The object is one of many to remind us that toys are multi-layered, multi-dimensional objects, and not the least of their capacities is that of transmitting ideological messages to those who are not yet equipped to read them critically – though in this case, at least, my children knew well enough that this particular toy depicted a monster. ■■



A History of the
BRITISH
ARMY
IN 25 BATTLES

EPILOGUE, POST 1945



EPILOGUE, POST 1945

Below UK service members of the Royal Air Force Regiment stop on a road while conducting a combat mission near Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, 2 January 2010.



EPILOGUE

The British Army: an invented tradition?

Concluding our British Battles series, we ask: how much does today's Army owe to its three centuries of tradition between 1645 and 1945?

The oil paintings, regimental silverware, and eccentric rituals of the modern officers' mess may imply a continuity of tradition.

But form should not be mistaken for substance. The British Army of the early 21st century is radically different from the Army that conquered and controlled the greatest of the European empires and then fought two world wars to hold onto it.

Modern campaigns may closely resemble colonial wars. The Afghan War still playing out may be regarded as the fourth in a series of similar British interventions in Central Asia. Each time, British expeditionary forces have intervened in an effort to suppress hostile political forces and install reliable client-regimes. The language has changed, but the essential character of the mission has not.

Nonetheless, while the Britain of the First and Second Afghan Wars (1839-1842 and 1878-1880) was the greatest imperial power on the planet, and the Britain of the Third (1919) had just emerged victorious from the First World War and remained secure in control of its land empire, the Britain of the Fourth (2001-present) is a declining second-rate power that acts as military proxy to another.

Army officers can afford to be sentimental and nostalgic about regimental traditions. Historians cannot. The job is serious analysis. And the truth is that Britain's rapid decline as an imperial power in the

post-war period has transformed the character of the Army.

When Michael Carver wrote *The Seven Ages of the British Army* (1984), he provided a useful model, though one we may wish to modify. His seven ages were hung on hooks formed by the careers of a succession of seminal commanders – Cromwell, Marlborough, Wellington, Wolseley/Roberts, Haig, Montgomery, and Templer. The scheme holds together well, and the book is a coherent and convincing narrative. Nonetheless, there is a case for redrawing some of the lines; though 'seven ages' (or perhaps six and a half) seems right.



Above Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658): politician, revolutionary, general, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, and effective founder of the British Army.

THE AGE OF CROMWELL 1645-1702

When the ramshackle, parochial militias of 1642 – whose roots were in the Anglo-Saxon fyrd of Hastings and the English longbowmen of Agincourt – proved hopelessly inadequate to the waging of all-out civil war, Parliament set about creating a professional army. But it did so with unsteady hand, its more conservative members fearful that they might conjure up an uncontrollable revolutionary beast that would devour them.

The case had to be pressed by radicals in the army high command, the most insistent of whom was one Oliver Cromwell, a politician and self-taught soldier of lower gentry stock from the Cambridgeshire Fenland. He wanted an army of 'godly, honest men', preferring 'a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing more'.

Cromwell's own regiment of cavalry – 'the Ironsides' – provided the pattern for the eventual remodelling of the entire army. The New Model Army of 1645, recruited from 'the middling sort' who powered both the Reformation and the Revolution, was a product of this vision of an army of free men. It was the medieval shire militia transformed into an instrument of revolution to strike down absolutism, bishops, and claims to divine right.

During the 15 years of its existence, the New Model became perhaps the finest

army in the world at the time, winning a succession of stunning victories in England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Low Countries. Though largely disbanded at the Restoration in 1660, the regiments that remained, and those hastily reformed soon after, were shaped by a military cadre of former revolutionary officers. The British Army was created by revolution against the Crown.

An army forged in revolution and war

For the next three centuries, the Army see-sawed between wartime expansion and peacetime neglect. Yet, however rundown, the Army continued to embody, in its military cadre, a distinctive tradition that amounted to a 'British way of war' – based on a combination of the linear formation and dogged defensiveness of the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall; the mobility and aggression of Cromwell's Ironsides; and the massed musketry honed to perfection by Marlborough's redcoats.

The British Revolution (a better name than the more conventional 'English Revolution') that created this synthesis was not a single event. It began in Edinburgh in 1637 and it did not definitively conclude until Culloden in 1746. But its decisive events were concentrated in the 1640s: Parliament's victory in the First Civil War (1642-1646), the New Model Army's victory in the Second (1648), Pride's Purge in December 1648, and the execution of the King in January 1649.

Below The Battle of Quebec (1759). The 'perfect volley' delivered by Wolfe's thin line of redcoats on the Heights of Abraham (though there were actually two volleys) decided the fate of Canada in a couple of minutes.



Above The Battle of Blenheim (1704). The triumph of Marlborough's redcoats signalled the emergence of Britain as a great power and the beginning of the end of the aristocratic *ancien régime* across Europe.

When the axe fell on Charles Stuart, the triumph of the bourgeoisie was assured. England would not follow France and become an absolute monarchy; it would become an evolving constitutional monarchy framing the power of the gentry, merchants, and adventurers whose dynamism would set Britain on its path to world empire and industrial revolution. The decision of 1649 was tested by Jacobite reaction in 1688, 1715, and 1745. Each time, the new order stood firm.

The early development of the British Army cannot be understood without this context. The British Revolution may have been resolved by a degree of compromise between the old Royalist elite and the new Parliamentarian elite, between aristocrat and bourgeois; but it was the latter who now shaped the history of the British Isles.



Above John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722): courtier, soldier, diplomat, victor of Blenheim, and Britain's greatest general.

THE AGE OF MARLBOROUGH 1702-1775

The Army, at root, was Parliament's not the King's. It was a bourgeois army offering 'a career open to talent' (albeit much qualified in practice) and one that embodied the method, discipline, and techno-savvy of the booming mercantile-capitalist society it served. The career of John Churchill, Britain's greatest general, is an obvious example of the former; the musketry drill, platoon ▶

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firing, and steady discipline of British redcoats an example of the latter.

Blenheim heralded the arrival of Britain as a great power, and inaugurated a century of redcoat battlefield supremacy. But it did more than this: it sounded the death knell of the *ancien régime* across Europe.

Again and again, when French whitecoats met English redcoats on European, Indian, and North American battlefields, the pattern would repeat: the nervous, ragged, premature fire of peasant-conscripts commanded by aristocratic officers on one side; the steady tread to close range, the careful dressing of the line, the methodical preparation to fire, and the massed volleys crashing out along the line on the other.

This was how the British won Canada on the Heights of Abraham in 1759: with 'the perfect volley' – years of training and months of effort culminating in a supreme moment of battle as Wolfe's line halted 40 yards from the French, as 2,500 muskets were levelled, as the volley exploded in streaks of fire, billowing smoke, and ear-splitting noise, and as the opposing line was blasted apart, hundreds of men down, the survivors standing in clumps amid heaps of broken bodies. Then a second volley. Then a bayonet charge. And it was over, the French in flight, the fate of Canada decided in a few minutes.

The dogged, defensive battles fought by British redcoats against the French between 1793 and 1815 were the swansong of a redundant tradition.



Above The Battle of Waterloo (1815).

A conservative British elite interpreted the victory as a vindication of their military tradition. In fact, a new age of 'nations in arms' had dawned and it was the redcoats' last hurrah. The British Army became pickled in complacency and negligence until the 1870s.

Right Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852): aristocrat, general, politician, victor of Waterloo, and a master of defensive battle.



THE AGE OF WELLINGTON 1775-1815

Success among social organisms often, however, breeds conservatism anew. The triumphs of British arms in the Seven Years War (1756-1763) had secured a vast colonial and maritime empire. The military tradition of men like Marlborough, Wolfe, and Brunswick surely needed no reforming. Yet new forces were germinating with a potential for reordering the world, much as the British had done with their 17th-century revolution.

The British Army may have won most of the battles of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), but it lost the most important of them (notably Saratoga and Yorktown), and it certainly lost the war. The redcoats who had broken the back of Louis XIV's France, a nation of 25 million, and the greatest superpower of its age, proved unable to suppress a revolutionary movement among three million or so American colonial settlers. The finest battalions in Europe were defeated by an improvised army of militia and 'continentals' that was often outnumbered and usually outgunned.

Crucial to the American victory was the embeddedness of the resistance: the

rebels waged war in the vast expanses of the North American wilderness, where they had made their homes and carved out their farms; and their military resistance was organically rooted in the thousand small towns of backcountry America, where the Revolution was a mass movement of farmers, traders, and 'mechanicals'. The British lost America because they faced a new kind of war – a 'people's war'.

The French way of war

The armies of the French Revolution and Napoleon turned people's war into an instrument of continental hegemony and colonial conquest. The *levée en masse* created conscript armies of unprecedented size. The social transformations of 1789 inspired a revolutionary fervour much different from the dull obedience of the *ancien régime*.

The genius of Napoleon – another self-made man of the revolution, like Cromwell and Marlborough – transformed strategy and tactics. The rapid movement of separate columns;

the sudden concentration; the violent onslaughts by concentrated batteries, clouds of skirmishers, and massive 'columns of attack' moving like steamrollers across the battlefield under revolutionary tricolours to the steady beat of the *pas de charge*. This was the new face of war.

The British won in the Peninsula because they were supported by an intractable insurgency that tied down most of the French army in Spain. They won at Waterloo because the Prussians arrived before Wellington's line could be broken. Yet, untainted by defeat, the British military tradition seemed confirmed. The real lessons of the American, French Revolutionary, and Napoleonic Wars were ignored.



Above Fitzroy Somerset, Lord Raglan (1788-1855): aristocrat, general, British commander-in-chief in the Crimean War, and symbol of the stupidity and irresponsibility of the high command by the middle of the 19th century.

THE AGE OF RAGLAN 1815-1880

The dogged, defensive battles fought by British redcoats against the French between 1793 and 1815 were the swansong of a redundant tradition, not testaments to its eternal virtue. Complacency after Waterloo was combined with post-war neglect and underfunding of the Army and a deeply conservative mood across Britain and Europe in the epoch of 'throne and altar' between 1815 and 1848. The result was decay, lack of modernisation, and then the military fiascos of the 1850s.

The blundering of the Crimean War generals was not an accident. It was prepared by decades in which the military hierarchy had hardened into an exclusion officer-caste. Corruption, favouritism, and incompetence

flourished because of the rigid class barriers erected in an ultra-conservative era. Men who knew other men got on; men who were intelligent, well-read, and had critical opinions were marginalised. The carnage at the Alma, the stupidity of Balaclava, the frostbite and hunger at Sebastopol, the filth and disease at Scutari: these were the bitter fruit of aristocratic colonisation of the British Army during four decades of reaction after Waterloo.

Once the immediate crisis ended, moreover, the drive to reform slowed. Its advocates continued to face determined resistance from Victorian 'Blimps' ensconced in military sinecures. Nonetheless, the Cardwell reforms of the 1870s were radical: the army of long-service soldiers recruited from the bottom of society and subjected to a military regime characterised by squalor and brutality was replaced with an army of short-service soldiers enrolled in local regiments, with improved pay and conditions. The abolition of both the lash and the purchase of commissions were symbolic.

THE AGE OF WOLSELEY, ROBERTS, AND KITCHENER 1880-1914

The reform of the Army was a gradual process. Three famous disasters signalled continuing deficiencies long after Cardwell left the war department: Isandlwana in 1879, Maiwand in 1880, and Majuba in 1881. Nonetheless, thanks in no small part to the role of three great Late Victorian commanders – Garnet Wolseley, Frederick Roberts, and Herbert Kitchener – the Army became increasingly proficient at adapting to a wide range of environments and enemies in a succession of colonial 'small wars'.

The Indian Army had followed a different developmental trajectory. It was an independent institution, with its own officer-corps and career structure (though many officers served in both the British and the Indian Armies at different stages of their careers, and British units routinely fought alongside Indian ones in major campaigns). The vast size and complexity of India – 'the jewel in the crown' – virtually guaranteed periodic military emergencies and fairly frequent experience of active service for its mix of Indian and British soldiers.

In the 1840s, while the British Army at home was languishing at the bottom of ▶



Garnet Wolseley Field-Marshal and Viscount (1833-1913): British Army career soldier, military reformer, and British commander in campaigns against French-Canadians, Ashanti tribesmen, Egyptian nationalists, and Sudanese Dervishes.



Frederick Roberts Field-Marshal and Earl (1832-1914): Indian Army career soldier and British commander in Second Afghan and Second Boer Wars.



Herbert Kitchener Field-Marshal and Earl (1850-1916): career soldier, British commander in campaigns against Sudanese Dervishes and Boer guerrillas, C-in-C in India, Viceroy in Egypt, and Secretary of State for War 1914-1916.

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its downward curve of post-Napoleonic decline, the Indian Army was winning the Sikh Wars. Though the Indian Mutiny revealed the limitations of this army in the 1850s – it fell to bits in the face of nationalist insurrection – subsequent reorganisation created a force impressive for its professionalism, coherence, and esprit de corps.

Nineteenth-century India was the training-ground of the British Army in the Victorian age. Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, for example, after 40 years' service – virtually all of which was spent in India – crowned his career with victory in the Second Boer War of 1899-1902, the largest overseas military operation ever mounted by the British Empire up until that time.

THE AGE OF HAIG AND MONTGOMERY 1914-1945

The Cardwell reforms of the 1870s were followed by those of Haldane, another great Liberal statesman who made his mark as Secretary of State for War. The most notable of the Haldane reforms, enacted between 1906 and 1912, was the creation of a formalised reserve army in the Territorial Force (later renamed the Territorial Army).

The Second Boer War had exposed the gross inadequacies of an army used to fighting Zulus, Dervishes, and Pathan hill-tribesmen. Facing a militia of superb marksmen, armed with modern rifles, the British crashed to bloody defeat as they mounted a succession of headlong

The British crashed to bloody defeat as they mounted a succession of headlong attacks into 'the storm of steel'.



Above Douglas Haig, Field-Marshal and Earl (1861-1928): career soldier, cavalry commander in Second Boer War, Inspector-General of Cavalry in India, C-in-C of British Expeditionary Force on Western Front from late 1915 until end of war. **Right** Bernard Montgomery, Field-Marshal and Viscount (1887-1976): career soldier, victor of Alamein, British commander in Tunisia, Italy, Normandy, and north-west Europe in 1943-1945.



attacks into 'the storm of steel'. Then, as they overpowered their enemies on the battlefield by sheer weight of numbers and firepower, they found themselves bogged down in a guerrilla war. This they could win only by deploying an army around ten times the size of the Boer commandos they faced in two years of counterinsurgency operations.

The quality, training, and field-craft of British infantry had been much improved by 1914. But the opening campaigns of the Great War revealed another gross inadequacy: lack of military manpower. Britain's small Regular Army was largely consumed in the battles of 1914. Its small Territorial Army was then largely consumed in the battles of 1915. And when its 'New Armies' of Kitchener volunteers were hurled into the maelstrom of modern industrialised battle on the Somme in the summer of 1916, the result was carnage without precedent.

Whose war is it anyway?

The armies raised by Britain in the First and Second World Wars were the first mass, national, conscript armies in the country's history. The transition to war on this scale, to total wars of attrition, to wars waged by citizen-soldiers rather than by regulars, or even reservists, was not easy. Indian Army cavalry generals who had previously commanded no more than a brigade of troopers on the North-West Frontier found themselves commanding divisions formed of East End cockneys, Lancashire mill-hands, and Welsh coal-miners on the Western Front.

The colonial militarism of another world found itself at odds with the burgeoning democracy of the homeland, represented by mass formations of wartime volunteers and conscripts. 'We claimed the right as citizen soldiers,' wrote Private Ron Scurry of the 1/7th Battalion of the Essex Regiment in 1917, referring to a bullying officer, 'to express our collective disapproval of Prussianised methods.'

The same sentiments were repeated at the beginning of the Second World War. Radicals like J B Priestley, George Orwell, and Tom Wintringham railed against 'the Blimps'. Now, though, the balance of forces had shifted decisively.

Below The Late Victorian Army became a highly professional instrument of colonial conquest and control. But using machine-guns to defeat tribesmen armed with swords and spears was very different from fighting modern troops equipped with magazine rifles.





Above A Boer firing line. Facing the concentrated modern firepower of Boer commandos taught the British Army valuable lessons for what was to come in 1914.

Instead of the Marne, there was Dunkirk. Instead of Ypres, the Blitz. The foreign war of generals and politicians became a people's war against fascism and invasion.

The British Army was turned inside out. By 1945, it was at the cutting-edge of radicalism, as Britain's rank-and-file soldiers voted overwhelmingly for Labour in the general election landslide that year. The army of Wellington, Raglan, and Roberts had been submerged by an army of citizen-soldiers who wanted jobs, homes, and 'cradle-to-grave' welfare.

THE POST-WAR AGE 1945 ONWARDS

The long history of the British Army is a mix of continuity and change; but the latter predominates. The Army of 1945 was closer in spirit to that of 1645 than to anything in between. The Army of 1704 stood at the beginning of a rapid ascent to global supremacy; that of 1815 had entered a twilight zone. The Army of 1898 was an expert instrument of colonial small wars; virtually nothing of it remained on the battlefields of the Hundred Days in 1918.

There has not been one British Army, but several. The traditions fossilised in regimental museums are mere inventions; veneers formed of flags, trophies, and anecdotes that bear little relation to the dynamic transformations they conceal.

So it has been since 1945, though perhaps, this time around, the changes have been especially marked. For they are founded upon a decline in economic

power, a waning of global influence, and a rapid retreat from empire – a sequence of related developments that has played out far faster than the corresponding ascent in the two centuries and more after 1645.

The British Empire had reached its greatest extent immediately after the First World War, but this had less to do with innate reserves of national military power than with US entry into the war in 1917. The defeat and prostration of Germany and her allies had allowed Britain and France to grab territory in Africa and the Middle East. That this was imperial overstretch – Britain's global position was already being undermined by relative economic decline – was momentarily obscured in the warm glow of victory. But the warning signs were there: Britain faced a wave of revolt in India, Egypt, and Ireland in 1919.

The effort of the Second World War proved wholly unsustainable without massive American support. Britain became, in effect, a financial tributary of the United States. The British Army invaded Europe in 1944 driving Lend-Lease Sherman tanks, and the British Government was kept afloat in the late 1940s (and enabled to build the welfare state) by a continuing flow of US loans in the form of Marshall Aid.

The Americans, on the other hand, had no intention of subsidising the British Empire. On the contrary, they wanted to prize open the old empires in favour of a global free-trade system that would provide markets for US exports.

The Suez Crisis of 1956 provided incontrovertible proof that the tectonic plates of geopolitical power had shifted. The Eden Government's attack on Egypt in alliance with France and Israel was scuppered by American financial sabotage.

End of empire

When the Labour Government granted independence to India and Pakistan in 1947, this was no more than a formalisation of the inevitable: if the British had not let go, they would have been driven out by force. The Indian Army, of course, broke up – its British officers and men heading home, its Indian and Pakistani elements coming apart in the crisis of Partition.

The impact was massive. India had, for two centuries, been central to the Empire, the Army, Britain's grand strategy, and the British elite's sense of greatness. Once India had gone, the rest were bound to follow, for how could 'the wind of change' be resisted elsewhere once such an example had been set?

Nonetheless, the British Empire dragged out its final years in a succession of dirty wars. 'In Palestine, Egypt, and Cyprus,' writes Correlli Barnett, 'a dreary pattern repeated itself: murder, arson, ambush, cities divided by barbed wire, road-blocks, and searches.'

These wars of decolonisation were miserable events. Occasionally, they allowed Britain's rulers to manage the transition to independence so as to protect residual interests in former territory. Just as often, they made no ▶

Below The men of the First World War were citizen-soldiers, either volunteers or conscripts, and their mass recruitment transformed the British Army into a species of people's army.



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Above The men – and women – of the Second World War were even less tolerant of ‘bull’ and ‘Blimps’. The wartime Army fostered the democracy and reformism that produced the 1945 Labour landslide.

difference at all – except to increase the killing and the bitterness on the way to an inevitable end. Invariably, they did the Army little credit, embroiling it in counterinsurgency wars conducted with all-too-predictable brutality; the recent Mau-Mau revelations have confirmed that beyond reasonable doubt.

Legacies of the past

That said, the British Army updated and refined its expertise in what used to be called ‘small wars’, and this has remained a particular feature of its modern-day character; it is central to its role in the so-called ‘war on terror’. Traditional emphasis on the quality, training, discipline, and technical expertise of the infantry is relevant to this. So too is the adaptability and flexibility of small formations facing diverse challenges in a range of different locales.

There is a marked contrast here with the Army’s other face since 1914: its existence as a mass conscript army during the World Wars, the Korean War (1950-1953), and the early part of the Cold War (1947-1989).

The British Empire dragged out its final years in a succession of dirty wars.

The British Army on the Rhine, permanently poised to respond to a Soviet land assault on Western Europe, absorbed around 25% of military strength throughout its long existence. But the abolition of conscription in 1960, ending National Service, meant that this commitment was radically

reconfigured – the BAOR ceased to resemble the large conventional forces of a major world power, and took on the character of a British expeditionary force of a kind that Marlborough or Wellington would have readily comprehended.

Since 1989, however, even this reduced continental role has come to an end. The great epoch of superpower confrontation that continued through most of the 20th century has dissolved into the myriad regional conflicts and proxy wars of a more multipolar world. At least for the time being.

The British Army continues to change; it continues to be less a single evolving institution, and more a succession of different institutions, each one formed from its predecessor in a crucible of historic imperatives. ■

SERIES FINALE

WITH THANKS TO

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Neil Faulkner, Editor of *Military History Monthly* and author of the British Battles series, will be speaking at the National Army Museum, 12.30-1.30pm, Thursday 26 September, on ‘Redcoats: the rise and fall of British battlefield supremacy, 1759-1815’.

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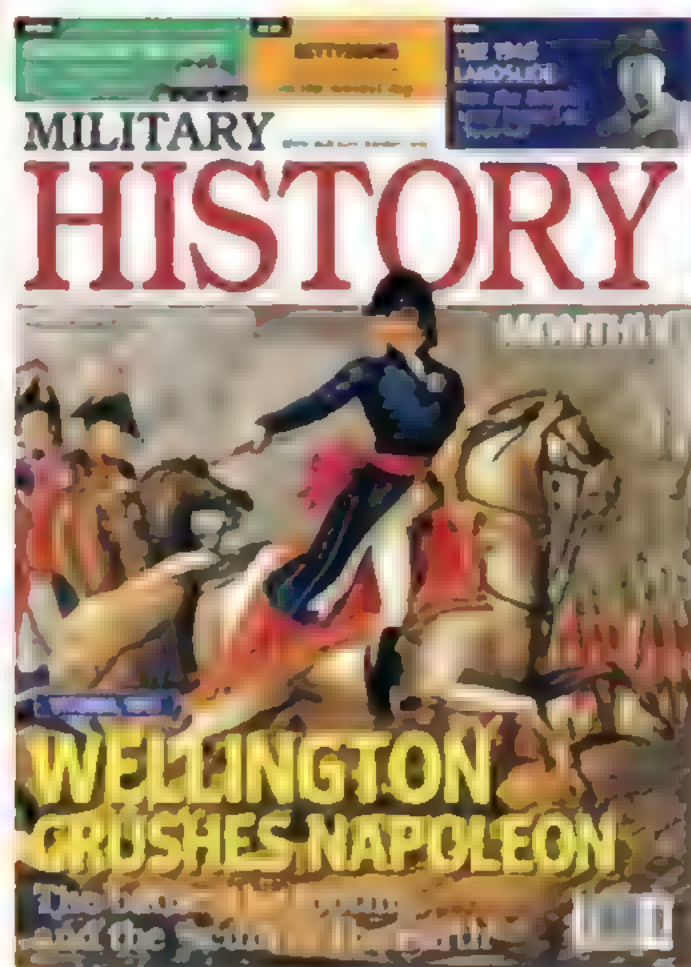
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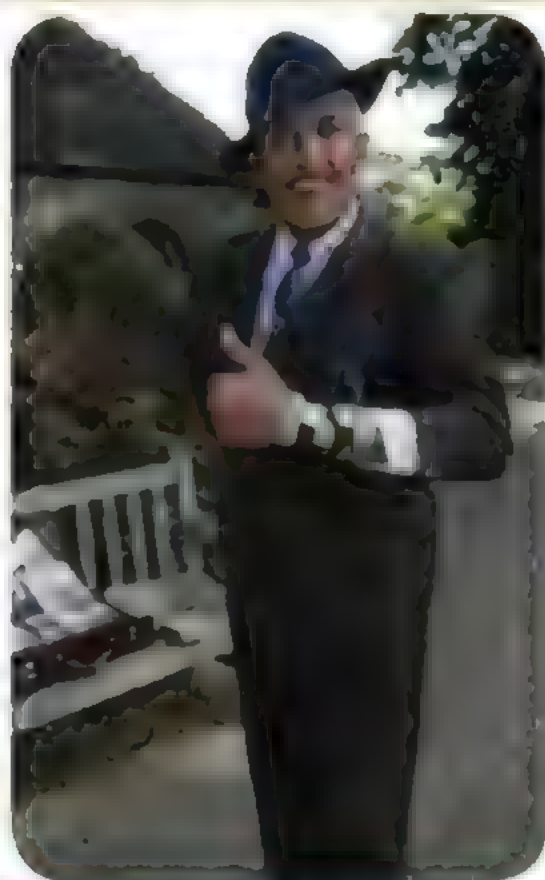
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Dark Times, Decent Men

STORIES OF IRISHMEN IN WORLD WAR II

Neil Richardson's *Dark Times, Decent Men* and Tim Newark's *The Fighting Irish* both deal with Irish soldiers' experiences during the Second World War. We asked both authors to give us a flavour, beginning with Neil Richardson.

On 26 January 1944, Sergeant Joseph Dunne was in command of a platoon holding the left flank of the 1st Irish Guards' position at Caraceto in Italy. At about 8am, a strong German counter-attack was put in.

One other platoon was overrun and two anti-tank guns and a machine-gun were knocked out, leaving this platoon's position completely exposed to high explosives and small-arms fire from enemy tanks. In spite of this, Sergeant Dunne reorganised his position at once and beat off two determined German infantry attacks, showing complete disregard for the heavy fire from the tanks.

During a night attack on 29/30 January 1944, the same NCO led his platoon with the highest skill and determination. When held up by a fixed line machine-gun, he dashed forward and destroyed the enemy post single-handedly, killing the two Germans manning it.

The following morning, his company, supported by American tank destroyers, carried out an offensive sweep to clear enemy machine-gunners and snipers from the ridge on the left flank of the brigade salient. During this operation, Sergeant Dunne led his platoon with the greatest efficiency and courage, destroying three enemy posts with no losses.

On the morning of 31 January, Sergeant Dunne located a German sniper's nest.

Below Lantern slide showing men of the 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers moving up to the front line during the attack on Centuripe, Aug 1943.



Armed with a rifle, he stalked this nest and killed five of the six occupants. Later, in the afternoon, he completed the job by killing the remaining sniper, who had taken refuge in Vallselata farm.

On the night of 3/4 February, the sergeant was with his company when it was overrun by a battalion of the enemy. Despite being wounded, he fought his way back to his own lines.

This NCO's record for skill, determination, marksmanship and personal courage during the whole of the battalion's action in the Anzio bridgehead was of the highest order.

Bombing run

Sergeant Joseph Dunne, from the small village of Killurin outside Tullamore in County Offaly, Ireland, is just one of the many unknown Irish soldiers whose story is told in my new book, *Dark Times, Decent Men: Stories of Irishmen in WWII*.

The anecdote above is taken from the 1944 publication 'Volunteers from Éire who have won distinctions serving with the British Forces'. But there were many Irish men and women who served with the British forces during the Second World War – or in other Allied combatant armies – whose experiences were never recorded. My aim was either to interview surviving Irish veterans or to gather whatever memories and stories remained among the families of those who had already passed away. It led me to some interesting discoveries.

On 10 May 1940 – the day that the Germans ended the 'Phoney War' and started the Battle of France – Sergeant Hubert 'Pat' Barron from County Waterford of No. 226 Bomber Squadron RAF was in the first wave of British aircraft to strike back at the enemy.

Ordered to target German vehicle columns in the vicinity of Luxembourg City, Barron – a sergeant pilot – came

With at least two or three tanks and some other vehicles blazing, bomber pilot Pat Barron turned back for Reims.



Above A Fairey Battle of No. 63 Squadron, RAF Benson, November 1939.

under intense enemy anti-aircraft fire as he reached the area. After being wounded by ground fire just above his left knee, he suddenly spotted his target, 'a column of enemy tanks and armoured vehicles on a road east of the city.'

He armed his bombs, dived on the lead vehicle – firing the Fairey Battle's machine-guns as he went – and released his payload of bombs, before circling around the column to strafe it with more machine-gun fire. Soon low on ammunition, but with 'at least two or three tanks and some other vehicles ... blazing and out of action', Pat turned back for Reims. He now began to feel faint from blood loss.

When he finally spotted Champagne Airport at Reims, and brought his plane in to land, 'the undercarriage collapsed [on touchdown], and we skidded along on the belly in a huge cloud of dust ... we came literally to a screeching halt.'

Fire engines and ambulances rushed over to his plane and Pat was pulled from the cockpit as his fellow crew-members jumped out and ran for safety. 'As we ran, now dragged along by two others, I heard and felt the explosion, as the aircraft burst into flames ... Then all went black for me.'

The Battle of France

Earlier in 1940, the 1st Irish Guards had fought in Norway. After lists of the Irish dead from this campaign appeared in the newspapers at home, the Irish government banned the media from publishing any further mentions of the country's war dead. From then on, when the names of Irish soldiers killed in the war appeared in the papers, it was stated that they had died while 'working in Britain'.

During the Battle of France, however, the Irish involvement was on a much greater scale. It included the infantry of 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Ulster Rifles, and 2nd Irish Guards, along with

the armoured 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards and the 3rd (Ulster) Anti-Aircraft Brigade of the Royal Artillery. Furthermore, out of the 4,500 fatalities suffered by the BEF during the German invasion, at least 400 are known to have been Irishmen.

As for Sergeant Hubert 'Pat' Barron, he was later evacuated from France. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal for the action mentioned above, he ultimately survived the war. He is only one of many unknown Irish airmen my researches have brought to light.

The others include Sergeant Lawrence Duffy from County Longford and Technical Sergeant Stephen Sweeney from County Kerry. While serving with No. 50 Squadron RAF, Duffy survived when his Lancaster crash-landed near Reichmannsdorf in Germany on 14 January 1945, only to be captured and placed in front of a hastily assembled firing squad made up of local German men. Fortunately, the women of the town protested wildly, and Duffy was spared execution and instead sent to a POW camp.

Meanwhile, Sweeney – who flew with various squadrons of the United States Army Air Force – became famous for flying every mission during the war with his pet dog Adolph, a beagle-dachshund crossbreed. The pair were even pictured on the cover of the 7 July 1944 edition of *Yank Magazine*.

Fighting with Funnies

As for North Africa and Italy, in late 1942 the 38th Irish Brigade, containing 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd London Irish Rifles, and 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (the latter replaced by 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in July 1944), went into action for the first time during Operation Torch, before going on ▶



Above 6th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers moving up to 'leapfrog' the 2nd Battalion London Irish Rifles in 1944. A tank of the 6th Armoured Division can be seen in the background.

to fight in Sicily and throughout the Italian Campaign.

Also in the desert were the North Irish Horse and 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars – both armoured regiments – and 1st Irish Guards, while 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers endured months of being besieged and bombed on the island of Malta before being wiped out on the Greek island of Leros. During the same period, 1st London Irish Rifles and 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers entered the fight with the invasion of Sicily.

After Italy came D-Day in France, and the only Irish recipient of the Military Cross for bravery awarded on that day was Captain Redmond Cunningham from County Waterford of the Royal Engineers. In command of a troop of 'Hobart's Funnies' – specialist tanks designed to clear enemy obstacles – of 79th Assault Squadron, Cunningham experienced some of the worst fighting in Queen Red sector on Sword Beach. Under fire from German artillery, mortars and machine-guns, it was his job to clear safe lanes up the invasion beach for the following waves of British infantry.

Redmond called up a bridge-carrying AVRE (Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers) to help both the remaining Crab (a Sherman flail tank) and his own AVRE

cross from the top of the beach to the dunes beyond. However, the bridge-carrier was hit by enemy artillery fire, and, though its crew exited their tank and managed to deploy the bridge while under heavy sniper fire, the Crab was hit and destroyed once it crossed.

Crabs and prods

Refusing to withdraw, 'Redmond jumped from his tank and ran back down the cleared mine path to the beach.' He found a Crab at the waterline 'doing nothing', so he ordered it forward. This Crab managed to cross the tank bridge and bypass the previously destroyed Crab tank – which was now on fire – and advance through the dunes.

Redmond 'followed in its tracks in his AVRE, but in the process [his tank was] hit multiple times.' Two of the crew were also badly wounded, and it soon became obvious that 'the new Crab was making little progress because of persistent enemy fire. Redmond abandoned his crippled tank and, realising that the mines in the dunes were laid too close together to be cleared by flails, decided the job had to be done by hand.'

He and his men initially used mine-detectors, but, as the unit war diary recorded, 'Prodding was then resorted to as the shrapnel on the ground made use of Mine Detector impractical.' It actually took four sweeps – all while under enemy mortar fire – to clear the lane, after which logs were dropped on the

sand to make a road for vehicles to use'.

Captain Redmond Cunningham was, as it happened, clearing the way on D-Day for a battalion of Irish troops to advance behind him – 2nd Royal Ulster Rifles, whose sister battalion, 1st Royal Ulster Rifles, deployed by glider later that day (making the Royal Ulster Rifles the only regiment in the entire Allied army to deploy by both air and sea on D-Day).

The Liverpool Irish – a TA unit – also fought on D-Day at Juno Beach, while 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars, and 2nd and 3rd Irish Guards soon joined their Irish comrades in the Normandy campaign. It must be recalled, however, that Irish soldiers did not serve exclusively in Irish units during the war – they also fought in the English, Scottish, or Welsh infantry or armoured regiments, jumped into Sicily, Normandy or Holland with the Parachute Regiment, or served with the wide range of service and support units, such as the Pioneer Corps, Army Service Corps, or the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Irish naval diver

Meanwhile, at sea, Leading Seaman James Magennis from Belfast earned the joint-last Victoria Cross of the Second World War. (By coincidence, another Irishman – Lieutenant Maurice Dease from County Westmeath of 4th Royal Fusiliers – had earned the first Victoria Cross of the First World War on 23 August 1914 during the Battle of Mons.)

On 31 July 1945, in Singapore Harbour, Magennis – a Royal Navy diver – was ordered to exit the midget submarine HMS *XE-3* and attach limpet mines to the hull of the Japanese heavy cruiser *Takao*. However, as recorded in Magennis' VC citation (*London Gazette*, 13 November 1945), 'The diver's hatch could not be fully opened because *XE-3* was tightly jammed under the target, and Magennis had to squeeze himself through the narrow space available.

'He experienced great difficulty in placing his limpets on the bottom of the cruiser owing both to the foul state of the bottom and to the pronounced slope upon which the limpets would not hold. Before a limpet could be placed, therefore, Magennis had thoroughly to scrape the area clear of barnacles, and in order to secure the limpets he had to tie them in pairs by a line passing under the cruiser keel.

'This was very tiring work for a diver, and he was, moreover, handicapped by a steady leakage of oxygen, which was

ascending in bubbles to the surface. A lesser man would have been content to place a few limpets and then to return to the craft. Magennis, however, persisted until he had placed his full outfit before returning to the craft in an exhausted condition.

‘Shortly after withdrawing, Lieutenant Fraser [the commanding officer of HMS *XE-3*] endeavoured to jettison his limpet carriers, but one of these would not release itself and fall clear of the craft. Despite his exhaustion, his oxygen leak, and the fact that there was every probability of his being sighted, Magennis at once volunteered to leave the craft and free the carrier rather than allow a less-experienced diver to undertake the job. After seven minutes of nerve-racking work, he succeeded in releasing the carrier. Magennis displayed very great courage and devotion to duty and complete disregard for his own safety.’

Leading Seaman James Magennis from Belfast and Lieutenant Ian Fraser were soon awarded the last VCs of the Second World War, but, in the Royal Navy especially, the Irish were represented at every level during the war. In fact, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham – First Sea Lord of the Admiralty and Chief of the Naval Staff from October 1943 to May 1946 – was from Dublin. He attended the Cairo, Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences while First Sea Lord, and was heavily involved in the Allied naval strategic planning surrounding the D-Day invasion.

In the thick of it

The Irish served everywhere during the Second World War and were ‘in the thick of it’ as much as the soldiers of the other Allied nations. Fusilier William ‘John Pat’ McCready from Lurgan, County Armagh – badly wounded on the Dunkirk beaches – had to play dead in order to avoid being executed by a German officer who was shooting wounded British soldiers.

Private Richard Adams from Dublin spent five years in a German POW camp and missed his daughters growing up.

At the time of his death on 15 July 1942, Wing-Commander Brendan Finucane from Dublin was the highest scoring RAF fighter ace of the war, while Kenneth Mackenzie from Belfast earned the nickname ‘Super Mac’ for ramming the tail of an enemy plane with his own wingtip in order to bring it down (he was out of ammunition) and later the nickname ‘Mad Mac’ for being released

from a POW camp after successfully convincing the Germans that he had gone insane.

Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice French from County Wexford – commanding officer of 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers – died ‘fighting to the best of his ability with a rifle to his shoulder’ on a desolate hillside on the Greek island of Leros, while in the Far East. Lance-Bombardier Joseph Barrett from Dublin – after ordering his anti-aircraft gun to be disassembled as the Japanese approached during the Battle of Singapore – refused Japanese demands to rebuild the gun after he was captured. He was tortured horrifically, later imprisoned, and then worked to death on the tiny Pacific island of Ballalae, along with 600 other officers and men of the Royal Artillery.

Voluntary sacrifice

Irish Jews also helped to defeat the Final Solution, the most famous of which was Belfast-born Chaim Herzog – he served in the Intelligence Corps during the war, was one of the first men to help liberate

Belsen Concentration Camp, positively identified Heinrich Himmler after his arrest on 21 May 1945, and later went on to become the sixth president of Israel.

Finally, it was an officer from County Cork – Captain William Upington of 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who lost an arm in North Africa – who commanded the Royal Review by King George VI at the Northern Ireland Parliament Buildings at Stormont, after the war.

It is known that at least 130,000 Irish men and women from across the island of Ireland served in the British forces during the Second World War. Conscription was never introduced in Northern Ireland, and Éire (as the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland were officially known during the Second World War) was neutral and no longer a part of the United Kingdom. So, the Irish who fought in the Second World War were all volunteers (even the Irish living in Britain, if conscripted, were offered the choice to serve or go home), and at least 7,500 are known to have died during 1939-1945. Their sacrifices should not be forgotten. ■

Dark Times, Decent Men: Stories of Irishmen in World War II was published by O'Brien Press, Dublin, in October last year.

Below Three men of the 6th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers take cover among the trees.



The Fighting Irish



Winston Churchill wanted to see the Irish play a full role in the Allied assault on Nazi Germany. In the bitter combat of North Africa and Italy, they more than demonstrated their fighting spirit, argues **Tim Newark**.

It was a letter in *The Times* that first caught Churchill's attention. 'It appears that very large numbers of Irishmen have joined HM Forces since the outbreak of war,' wrote retired General Sir Hubert Gough in September 1941. 'This is their own spontaneous and unsolicited act, since owing to Ireland's neutrality there have been no agencies where they could enlist at home and no recruiting campaign. It is a pity that the fact – well known as it appears to be in Ireland – is not more widely realised here, as it is valuable evidence that Irish neutrality is not a mask for a hostile spirit towards Britain and the Commonwealth at war.'

Gough went on to suggest that the fighting spirit of the Irish was particularly strong when they served in units grouped together under an Irish banner, and recommended that Irish and Anglo-Irish serve together in an Irish Brigade.

Churchill loved the idea, and in an unguarded personal note to the Secretary of State for War wrote, 'I shall be glad to have an expression of opinion from the War Office on this suggestion. We have Free French and Vichy French, so why not

Loyal Irish and Dublin Irish?' The Irish government might not have appreciated the comparison to collaborationist Vichy France.

Men of Irish Blood

Churchill's enthusiasm for an Irish Brigade was strengthened when he saw extracts from letters secretly intercepted in Northern Ireland for a Postal Censorship Report. 'Patrick is 19 years old,' wrote one correspondent from Waterford to a friend in Hampshire. 'He joined up entirely off his own bat [sic] and I must say that all his boy friends over here from three counties have done likewise, so Ireland shouldn't be damned so freely.'

Churchill underlined several similar passages in red and repeated his request for the War Office to look at this suggestion: 'I think now the time is ripe to form an Irish Brigade also an Irish Wing or Squadron of the RAF.' The Prime Minister recommended that the Dublin-born Battle of Britain RAF Spitfire ace Paddy Finucane would make an excellent figurehead for such a force. 'Pray let me have proposal,' insisted Churchill. Then, with an eye to post-war developments, he added: 'The

Above The men of the 6th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, moving up to the front line during the advance of the 78th Division on the town of Centuripe.

movement might have important political reactions later on.'

It was the political ramifications of an Irish Brigade that concerned David Margesson, Secretary of State for War, and Viscount Cranborne, Secretary of State for the Dominions, in their joint reply. They liked the idea of an official show of appreciation to all the volunteers from Eire, but also did not wish to disrupt this flow. 'Up to now, men have gone from Ireland unobtrusively, and nothing has been said to underline their presence in our armed forces. It has therefore been possible for the Southern Irish Government to wink at it. But were we to blazon abroad the part which the citizens of neutral Eire are taking in the war, contrary to the policy of their own Government, the Irish Government might well feel bound to take action to prevent the departure of any further volunteers from their shores to join our forces. Were they to do so, we should have lost far more than we gained.'

It would be estimated by the Dominions Office that some 43,000 Eire-born Irish men and women had joined the British services by the end of the war. In their letter to Churchill, Margesson and Cranborne made the case that southern Irish volunteers might not like it to be known that they had fought for the British as this might penalise them at home. 'Further, there is the possibility that completely Irish units, so far from being the symbol of the close connection between Britain and Ireland, might become a fertile breeding ground for subversive agitation by the IRA and other disloyal elements, who would join them for this very purpose.'

Consideration was given to establishing a Shamrock Squadron, formed from 'men of Irish blood from all parts of the world,' but the view of the Air Ministry was that there was no demand for this within the service and that Irishmen would object to being removed from their current units.

The only positive suggestion was to brigade together existing British Army Irish battalions, such as those from the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Royal Irish Fusiliers, and London Irish Rifles.

Somewhat deflated by the arguments coming from the War Office, Churchill scribbled his own reply on this joint memorandum, 'As proposed. It is a halfway house.'

But, as if this wasn't disappointing enough, word of the suggested Irish Brigade got to John Andrews, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. In a forceful letter to Churchill, in which he apologised for burdening him with extra trouble, he appealed to the war leader's acute sense of military history. 'The name would inevitably be associated with the Irish who fought against England in the days of Marlborough, the Irish Brigade which fought against Britain in the Boer War... and finally with a body of "Blue Shirts" organised in Eire a few years ago to fight in the Spanish Civil War.'

With Churchill abroad in the United States talking to US President Roosevelt, Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee stepped into the growing controversy, saying that Andrews had got the wrong end of the stick. There was no intention to raise an Irish Brigade as originally suggested by General Gough, just to brigade together several Ulster regiments within the British Army. He reassured Andrews that no particular publicity would be given to the proposed brigade 'until occasion arises to do so when it has distinguished itself in action'.

Andrews was unimpressed. 'While, of course, I appreciate the desire of the British Government to give recognition in due course to those Eire citizens who are loyally supporting the Allied cause,' he wrote, 'we feel that the use of Ulster regiments for that purpose would arouse resentment here. In my view, any policy calculated to obliterate or blur the distinction between the belligerency of Northern Ireland and the neutrality of Eire would confuse and mislead public opinion and be detrimental to the highest interest of the Empire as a whole.'

The Brigade is born

In the end, it was the will of Winston Churchill that prevailed, although in the moderated form suggested by the War Office. In January 1942, the 38th (Irish) Brigade came into being, consisting of the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, the 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and the 2nd London Irish Rifles. The London Irish were a Territorial unit associated with the Royal Ulster Rifles.

The Irish identity of the Brigade was strongly established from the outset with a saffron-kilted pipe band for each battalion, a song-book full of Irish songs, and soldiers wearing the 'caubeen' – a traditional Irish beret or tam o'shanter-style headdress worn with a feather hackle favoured by Irish warriors since at least the 17th century.

Its first commander was Brigadier Morgan O'Donovan, who adopted the traditional clan title of 'The O'Donovan'. He was soon after succeeded by Brigadier Nelson Russell.

The Irish 38th first went into action in November 1942 as part of the Anglo-American landings in French North Africa at Algiers in Operation Torch. It was the dramatic beginning to a very long and bloody series of campaigns for Churchill's cherished Irish Brigade.

The Brigade's identity was quickly established, with a pipe band for each battalion and a song-book full of Irish songs.

Edmund 'Ted' O'Sullivan was a typical London Irishman. Born in Peckham in 1919, his father's side of the family had come from Limerick and his mother's side from Kerry. Raised a Catholic, he was schooled at Brompton Oratory after winning a scholarship, and had just got his first job as a clerk at uniform-makers Hawkes of Saville Row, when the war came.

Called up in September 1939 into the 2nd Battalion of the London Irish Rifles, he spent the first three years of the war in training. Promoted to Colour Sergeant, O'Sullivan was one of the Irish Brigade who landed in North Africa in 1942.

'We climbed out of Algiers in thick service dress,' he recalled, 'carrying everything in the hot midday sun. The pipers carried only their pipes. The first mile out of Algiers was a steady climb up a road that wound in a semi-circle. Gradually men collapsed from heat and exhaustion. At first, stretcher-bearers went to attend to them. Eventually, we left them where they fell.'

The Irish in North Africa

Part of the 6th Armoured Division, the London Irish and the rest of the 38th Brigade were transported by lorries to the battlefield in Tunisia along roads in the Atlas Mountains. The Italian-German forces were dug in along a north-south line 30 miles west of the capital of Tunis. The main Allied offensive came in January 1943. The weather was poor and heavy winter rain turned the ground to mud.

The London Irish were tasked with taking Point 286 on 20 January, a hilltop held by the Germans in the northern Bou Arada sector. They took it just after dawn, but were swept off it in a counter-attack supported by tanks and armoured cars. As the London Irish went back to wrestle them off the hill, the Germans called in Stuka dive-bombers.

'It was practically impossible to dig in on the hard rocky slopes,' reported Brigadier Nelson Russell, 'and all through the day they were subjected to heavy artillery and extremely accurate mortar fire. This fine battalion refused to be shelled off the position. What they had, they held. But at heavy cost.'

As the Brigadier later noted, 'The Irish Brigade learnt at a hard school. From the very start we were opposed by the Koch Brigade of the Hermann Goering Division. They were paratroops, all unmarried volunteers, and the average age was 22-23.'

Throughout the fighting, Colour-Sergeant Ted O'Sullivan was back at the ▶

supply base getting hot food for his men. When he arrived at the captured position, he was shocked to see that several key officers had been killed or wounded. 'It was a shambles,' recalled O'Sullivan. 'There seemed to be no order or discipline.' Some of the NCOs had dropped their weapons and fled. Six officers and 20 other ranks were killed, eight officers and 78 other ranks wounded, and at least 136 other soldiers missing. These were later confirmed as either wounded or made prisoner.

Brigadier Russell considered it a tough but critical clash, whereas O'Sullivan believed it was poorly executed, with men exhausted by previous night patrols. Along with the other colour-sergeants, O'Sullivan was rebuked for not promoting NCOs from the survivors.

Rommel attacks

In February, the Germans, led by General Erwin Rommel, assaulted the British and American lines. On the 26th, they came back to the Bou Arada position held by the London Irish. O'Sullivan was delivering rations to his men in the morning when his truck came under fire.

Armed with a couple of grenades and rifles, he and the driver jumped out of the vehicle: 'We did not have a clear field of fire and could see little more than the bushes about 50 yards to our front. I was going to move forward when the undergrowth in front of us started to shake violently. I shouted a warning to Percy and we were preparing to open fire when a goat's head followed by about 20 others broke through the shrubs followed by a young lad.'

The enemy had moved on. The rest of the Irish Brigade clung on to their positions and after 24 hours of hard fighting, the Germans had had enough,

and withdrew. A hill near Hadj was re-taken with an artillery barrage. 'For many weeks after the battle,' remembered O'Sullivan, 'you could smell Hadj from almost a mile away. The stench of death was all pervading. Using an old towel, I cleaned the pieces of flesh which clung to the branches of trees. We buried our dead with honour but not the enemy, who were interred without ceremony.'

The German breakthrough failed and the Allies pushed on towards Tunis. After a period of rest, the Irish Brigade, including the London Irish, were transferred to the 78th Infantry Division.

On 22 April, a massive Allied barrage crashed down on the Germans, and the Irish Brigade played their part in the assault. As they closed in on the capital, Brigadier Russell drove past a mile-long column trudging along the dusty roadside. 'About 3,000 prisoners,' he noted, 'Bosche and Italian, soldiers, sailors and airmen.'

The Irish Brigade was given the honour of first entering Tunis, but they were not too sure what sort of reception they would get. Just in case, recorded Russell, 'The troops were all loaded up with bombs, Piats, mortars and petards – all set for a bellyful of street fighting – and the last lap.'

The War ends

They needn't have worried. 'I remained in my three-tonner,' said O'Sullivan, 'which soon became bedecked with flowers. The men were garlanded, kissed and cheered by the French colon[ial]s, who were relieved the war was over for them with little damage to their home.'

Brigadier Russell was kissed twice by the delighted citizens. At a victory parade on 20 May, the Irish Brigade marched in their caubeens with saffron kilted pipers before Generals Eisenhower, Alexander, and Montgomery.

'I always felt I was very lucky to command the Irish Brigade,' wrote Brigadier Russell

at the conclusion of the Tunisian campaign. 'I wouldn't change my command for all the tea in China, or perhaps better, all the stout in Guinness!'

It was in Tunisia in 1943 that Irish Guardsman John Kenneally won a Victoria Cross by charging German Panzer grenadiers, firing a Bren gun from his hip. 'This outstanding act of gallantry,' said his citation, 'and the dash with which it was executed completely unbalanced the enemy company, which broke up in disorder.'

Kenneally then repeated this exploit two days later, inflicting so many casualties on the Germans that they cancelled their planned assault on the Allied lines. Although wounded in this attack, he carried on fighting throughout the day. It was an extraordinary achievement, but Kenneally wasn't all that he seemed. In fact, he wasn't Irish at all, but half-Jewish, from Birmingham.

His real name was Leslie Robinson. When war broke out, he joined the Royal Artillery in an anti-aircraft battery, but found this boring and deserted. In Glasgow, he fell in with a gang of Irish labourers who gave him a fake identity as John Patrick Kenneally and a fake past that included a childhood in Tipperary. Under this name he joined the Irish Guards.

Two years later, Churchill was delighted to hear of the VC, contrasting this 'Irish' hero with the Irish premier 'frolicking' with the Germans. Such publicity was the last thing Kenneally needed. 'It was the worst thing that could have happened to me,' he said. 'I thought "Now I'm bound to be rumbled", but I never was.' ❧

*Extract from The Fighting Irish
(Constable) by Tim Newark.*

Below The men of the 6th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers looking out from the town of Centuripe, in the direction of the enemy retreat; part of the town is pictured.



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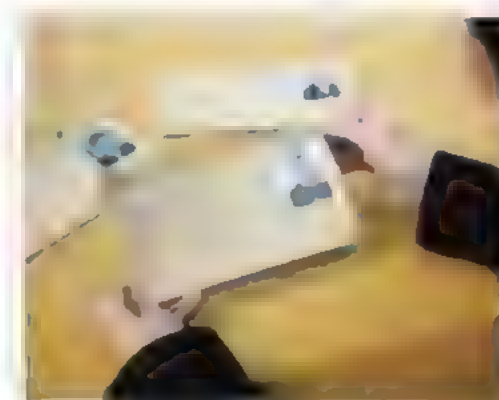
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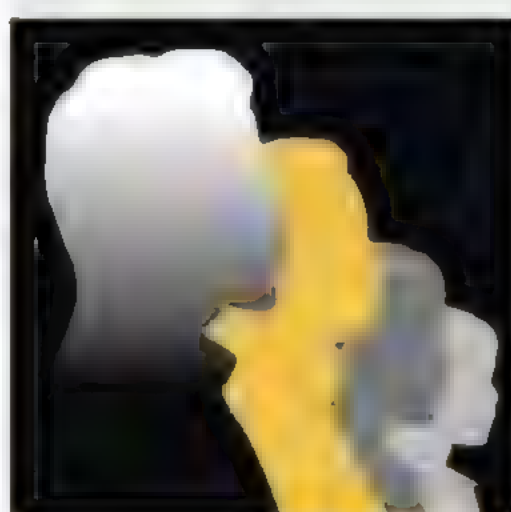
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www.inthefootsteps.com





Naval GUNPOWER

Little changed in the 300 years between the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the Battle of Trafalgar. Nelson's gunners may have found the deck rather cramped, but they would have considered Drake's guns familiar-looking enough. Then, during the 19th century, naval artillery was transformed out of recognition.

In less than 100 years, wooden sailing ships of the line armed with smoothbore cannon were superseded by turbine-powered, heavily armoured battleships carrying turret-mounted guns with ranges in excess of 21 kilometres (13 miles).

The earliest signs of change came with General Henri-Joseph Paixhans' invention of the Paixhans gun, the first successful high-velocity naval anti-ship weapon specifically designed to fire explosive shells. (The mortars that armed the bomb vessels of the 18th century had fired shells, but were primarily shore bombardment weapons.)

Paixhans' guns entered service with the French navy in 1829, and by the 1840s, all major navies had adopted a mix of shell and shot-firing guns. Warships, however, were still wooden-hulled sailing

vessels (with auxiliary steam engines) and were highly vulnerable to each other's weapons. The long period of peace in Europe meant that the first practical demonstration of the effects of shellfire on wooden warships came at Sinope in 1853, when Russian ships destroyed a Turkish fleet.

First ironclads

Sinope spurred the development of armoured vessels, which first went into action during the Crimean War. Three French ironclad 'floating batteries' (*Lave*, *Tonnante*, and *Dévastation*) forced the surrender of the Russian fortresses at Kinburn on the Dnieper estuary after a four-hour bombardment. Although the three batteries sustained a total of 200 hits by Russian 18- and 32-pdr shot, their armour deflected almost all of it and they suffered only 27 casualties.

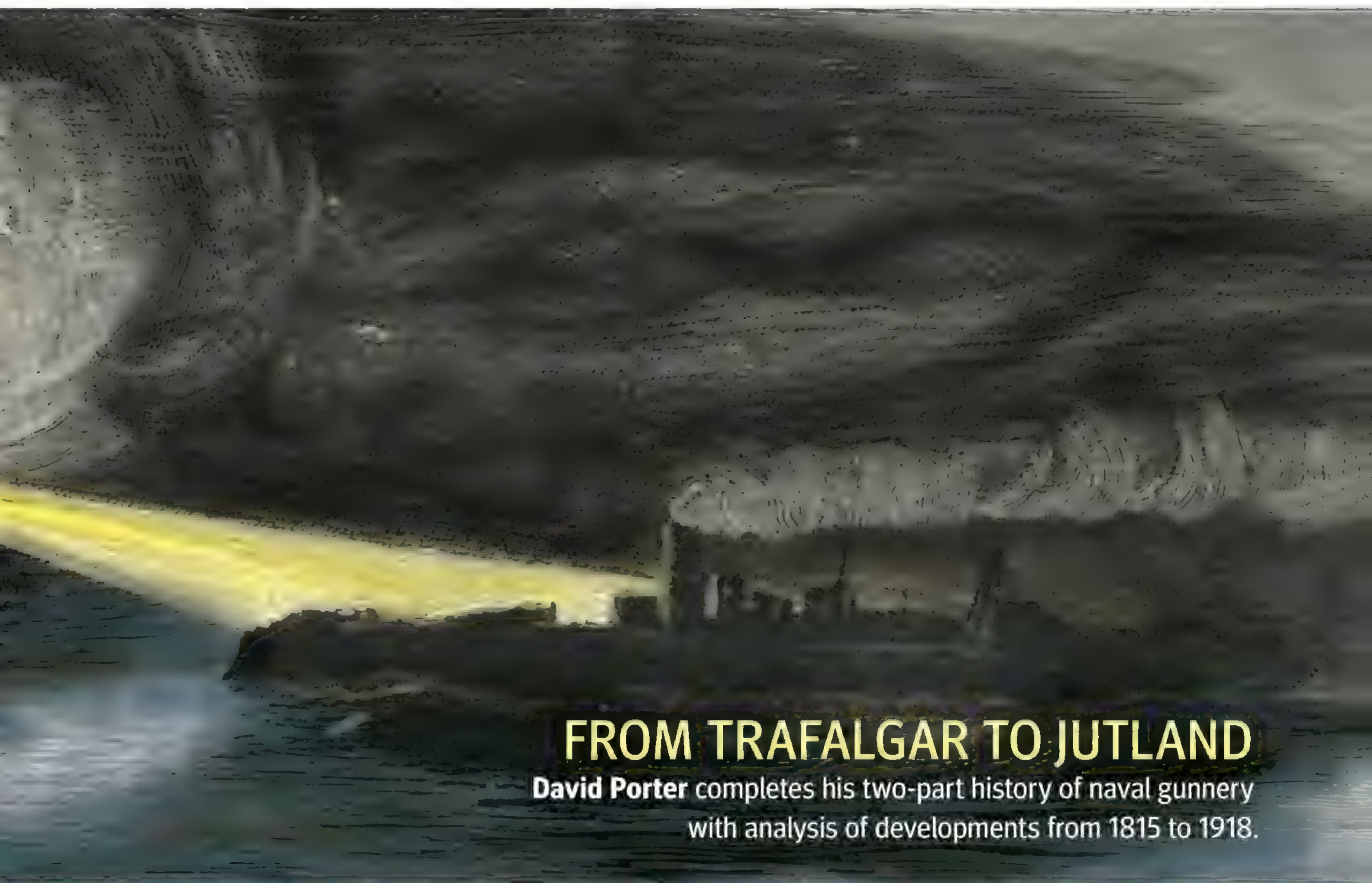
This success prompted the development of *La Gloire*, the first ever seagoing ironclad battleship, which was commissioned in August 1860. Designed by France's brilliant chief naval architect Dupuy de Lôme, she was a wooden-hulled frigate – basically a ship-of-the-line – cut down by one deck, armed with 33 rifled 163mm

muzzle-loaders and sheathed in 120mm (4.7 inches) of wrought-iron armour.

La Gloire posed such an obvious threat to British maritime superiority that the Admiralty immediately authorised the construction of a vessel to counter her. Work began as soon as details of the French warship leaked out: HMS *Warrior* was commissioned in August 1861.

Warrior was no mere copy of *Gloire*. Her iron hull was protected by 114mm (4.5 inch) of iron armour backed by 457mm (18 inches) of teak, and she was

La Gloire was armed with 33 163mm rifled muzzle-loaders and sheathed in 120mm of wrought-iron armour.'

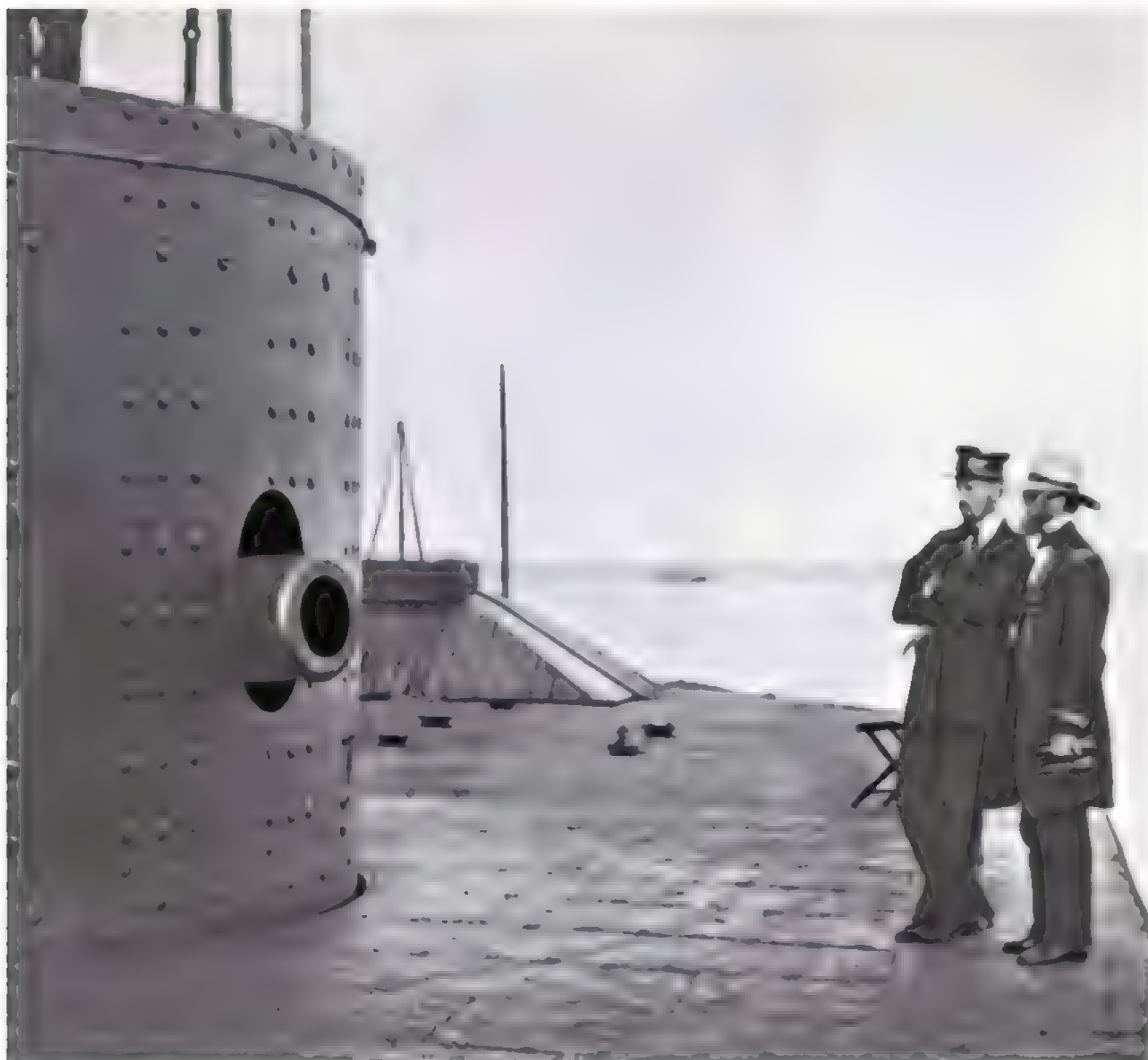


FROM TRAFALGAR TO JUTLAND

David Porter completes his two-part history of naval gunnery with analysis of developments from 1815 to 1918.

Above A contemporary Japanese print of a late 19th-century naval gun-crew in action.

Below The USS *Monitor*, the American Civil War ironclad, whose rotating turret housing two 11-inch guns heralded the future form of the big-gun battleship.



armed with 26 muzzle-loading 68-pdr smoothbore guns, ten rifled breech-loading (RBL) 7-inch Armstrong guns, and four (RBL) 40-pdr Armstrong guns.

The 68-pdrs were among the most powerful smoothbore guns ever produced, their shot easily capable of penetrating *Gloire's* armour at battle ranges. Ironically, for all its sophistication, Armstrong's breech mechanism proved to be incapable of withstanding the force of the large propelling charges required for penetrating armoured targets and was restricted to firing shells whose smaller charges put less strain on the breech. Even so, there were some spectacular accidents.

One of HMS *Euryalus's* officers recalled an incident during the bombardment of Kagoshima in August 1863: 'We had on our main-deck 32-pdr 56-cwt muzzle-loaders; and they, of course, gave no trouble... in the forecastle we had a 7-inch BL 110-pdr Armstrong. Whether the men in the heat of the action became hurried I cannot say; but certain it is that the breech piece of this gun blew out with tremendous effect, the concussion knocking down the whole gun's crew, and apparently paralysing the men, until Webster, captain of the forecastle ►



Above A contemporary Japanese print depicting the sinking of a Russian warship at the Battle of Tsushima.

and of the gun, roused them by shouting: "Well; is there a b---- of you will go and get the spare vent piece?"

Muzzle-loaders versus breech-loaders

Such problems led to a return to muzzle-loading weapons of increasing power until the 1880s. After a brief introduction of the 100-pdr or 240mm (9.5-inch) smoothbore Somerset Gun, which weighed 6.5 tons, the Admiralty introduced 7-inch (178mm) rifled guns, weighing 7 tons. These were followed by a series of increasingly mammoth weapons – guns weighing 12, 25, 28, 38, and finally 81 tons, with calibre increasing from 203mm (8-inch) to 406mm (16-inch).

This rapid growth was driven by the need to penetrate ever-thickening battleship armour – the 'gun-armour race'. The increasing bulk and weight of battleships' main armament meant that the simple broadside arrangement of the *Gloire* and *Warrior* had to be replaced by more sophisticated mountings. As early as 1862, the USS *Monitor* carried her two 11-inch (280mm) Dahlgren guns in a fully rotating, steam-powered turret, which set the trend for future warships.

The iron armour of early ironclads was frequently backed by thick layers of wood (usually teak) to absorb the shock of hits by large-calibre armour-piercing rounds. By the mid 1870s, conventional iron armours had to be 560mm (22 inches) thick to give adequate protection against the guns of contemporary battleships.

However, iron armour was rapidly becoming too heavy even for a battleship – soon reaching as much as a quarter of total displacement – and was superseded by compound armour in the early 1880s.

Better armour

Compound armour was made from two different types of steel; a very hard but brittle high-carbon steel front plate backed by a more elastic low-carbon wrought-iron plate. The front plate was intended to break up an incoming shell, whilst the rear plate would catch any splinters and hold the armour together if the brittle front plate shattered.

The rapid growth in gun tonnage was driven by the need to penetrate ever-thickening battleship armour – the 'gun-armour race'.

Below A contemporary magazine illustration of a British naval gun-crew taking part in exercises in 1888.





Above The Battle of Tsushima in 1905 was Imperial Japan's Trafalgar – a total and decisive victory over the enemy fleet, achieved by superior gunnery.

This in turn was replaced with more effective case-hardened steel armour made using the Harvey process developed in the United States. First tested in 1891, Harvey armour was commonplace in ships laid down in 1893-1895. Its reign was brief because in 1895 the Germans began production of the even better Krupp armour. European navies adopted Krupp plate within five years, and only the United States persisted in using Harvey steel into the 20th century.

The improving quality of armour plate meant that new ships could have better protection from a thinner and lighter armour belt: 305mm (12 inches) of

compound armour provided the same protection as 190mm (7.5 inches) of Harvey or 133mm (5.25 inches) of Krupp plate.

Power loading

From 1875 onwards, the balance between breech- and muzzle-loading changed. Captain de Bange invented a method of reliable breech sealing, adopted by the French in 1873. Just as compelling, the growing size of naval guns made muzzle-loading a much more involved and hazardous business. The largest guns were impossible to haul in for reloading, or even to reload by hand. Complex hydraulic systems had to be developed

to load the gun outside the turret without exposing the crew to enemy fire.

Even with such power assistance, rates of fire were very slow. In 1882, the 81-ton, 406mm (16-inch) guns of HMS *Inflexible* fired only once every 11 minutes during the bombardment of Alexandria. Each of the 100-ton, 450mm (17.72-inch) guns of the Italian battleship *Caio Duilio*, commissioned in 1880, could fire only one 910kg (2,000lb) round every 15 minutes.

The dangers of such large-calibre RML guns were dramatically illustrated by an accident aboard HMS *Thunderer* in January 1879, when the left 305mm (12-inch) gun in the forward turret exploded during practice firing in the Sea of Marmora, killing 11 and injuring a further 35. The explosion was caused by double-loading the gun after it had misfired. It was a major factor in the Royal Navy's decision to revert to breech-loading guns.

'Quick-firers'

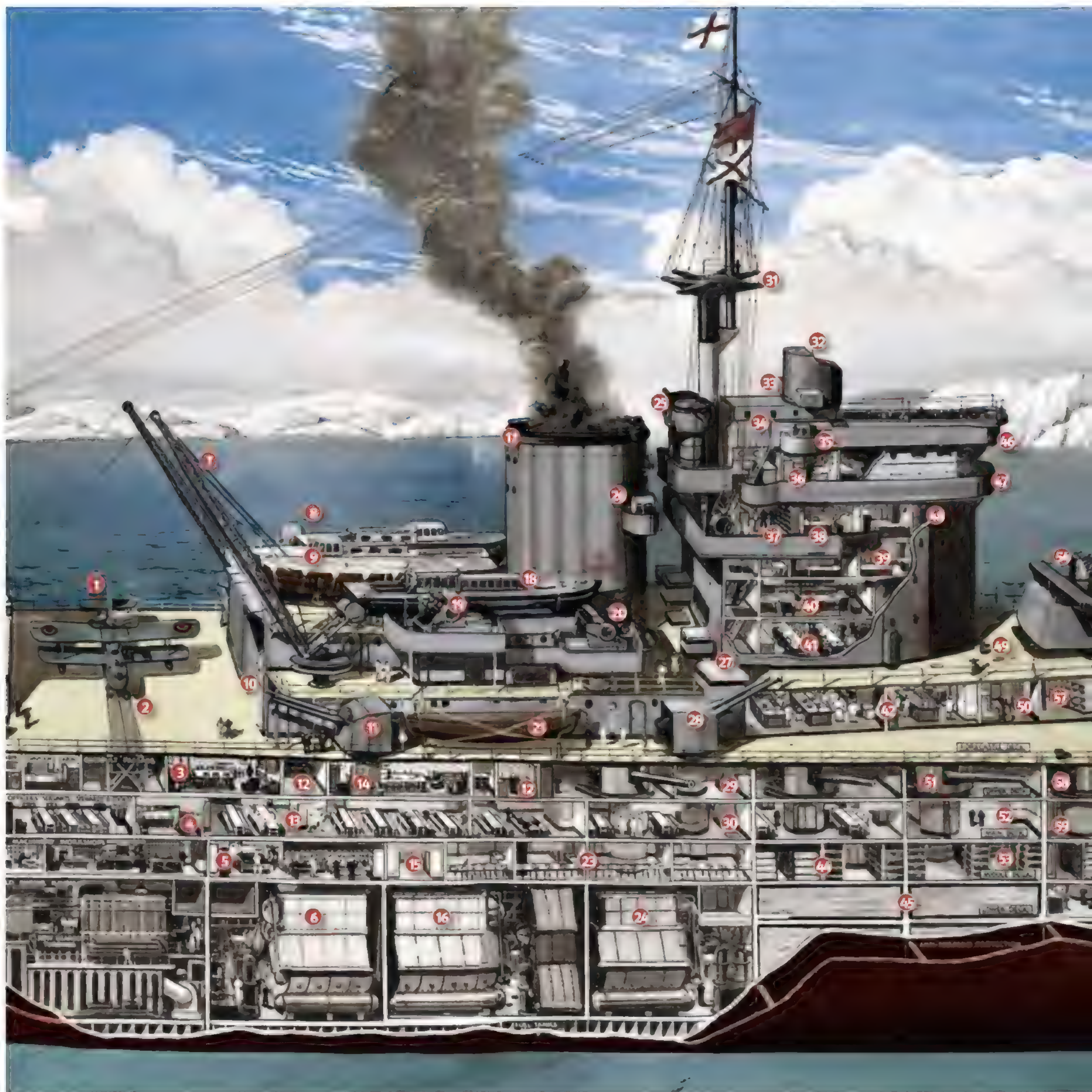
Increasing numbers of small, fast torpedo-boats during the 1870s and 1880s posed a major threat to contemporary battleships as the torpedo was developed from a novelty into a practical weapon. A single hit from any battleship's main armament was almost certain to obliterate any torpedo-boat, but obtaining a hit on such an elusive target with the slow-firing heavy guns of the period was virtually a matter of chance.

A plethora of light weapons was hastily fitted to all major warships to counter ▸

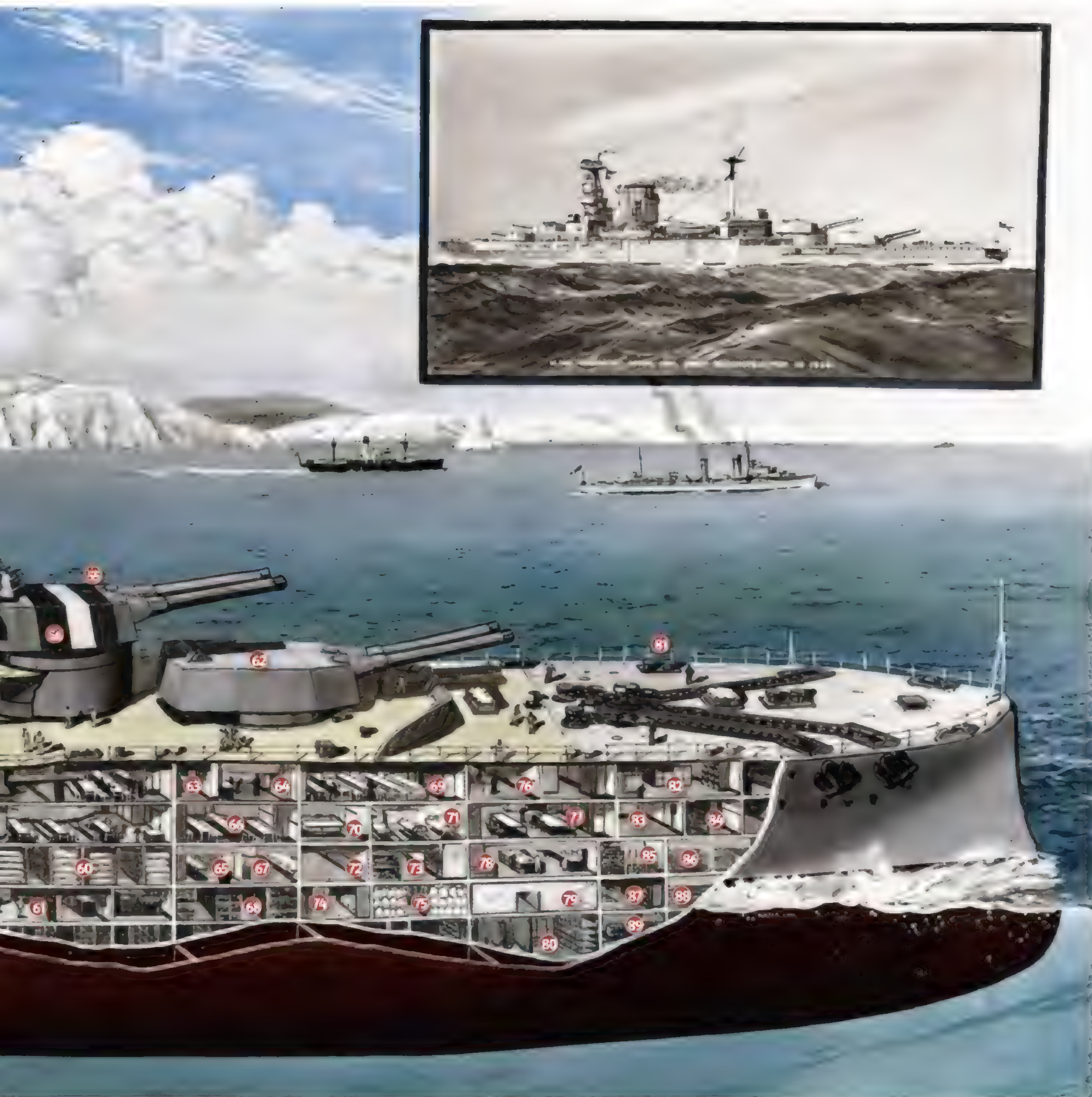
Below A contemporary Japanese print of a late 19th-century naval gun-crew in action.



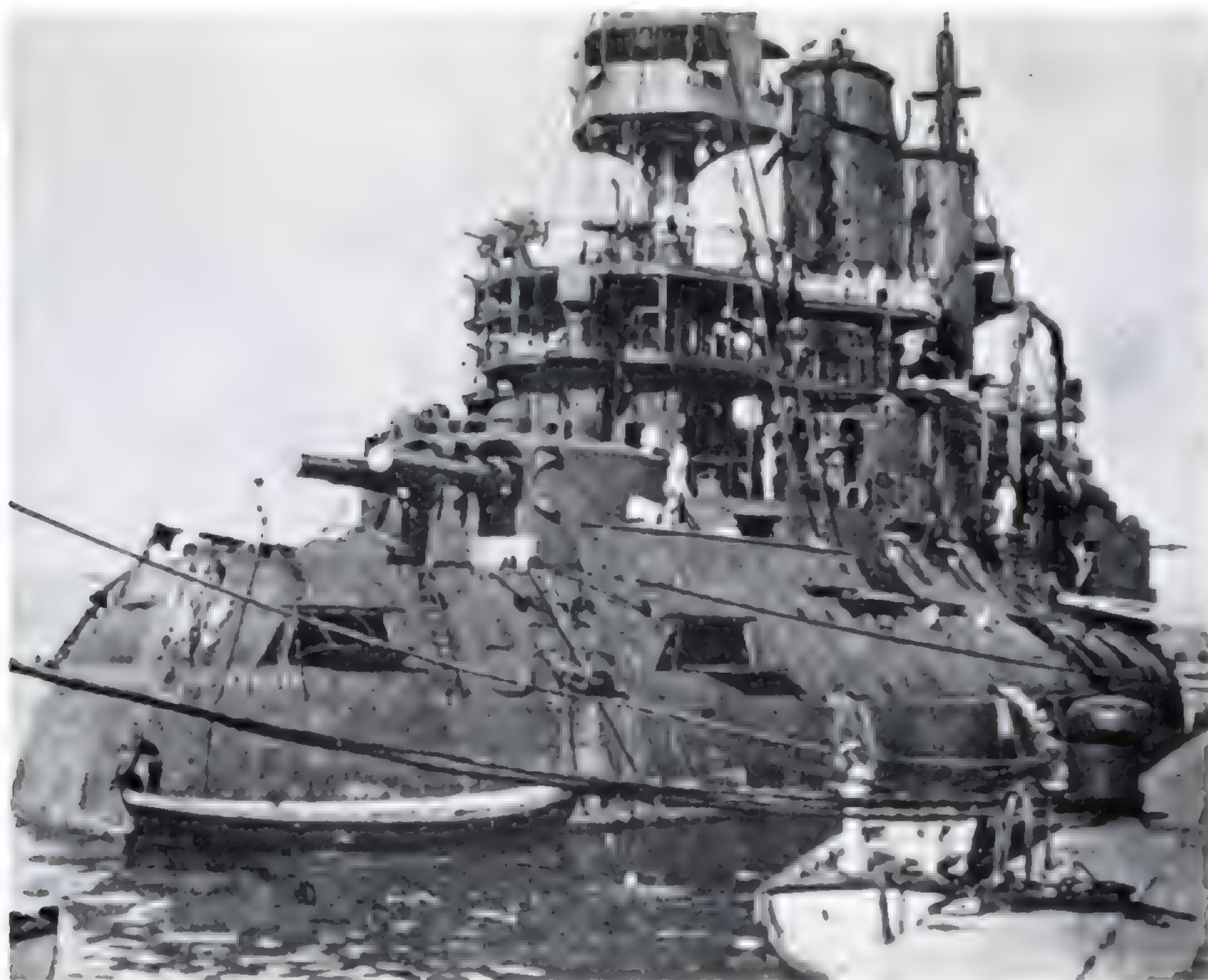
NAVAL GUNPOWER



- | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Walrus amphibian aircraft on catapult | 8. Two 45ft motor speed boats | 15. Dressing room | 21. 32ft life cutter | secondary battery of 6-inch guns | 37. 44-inch searchlight |
| 2. Athwartship catapult | 9. 42ft sailing launch | 16. No. 3 boiler room | 22. Pantry | 30. Mess space | 38. Admiral's sea cabin |
| 3. Gun room | 10. Aircraft hangars | 17. New-type funnel with enclosed steam pipes | 23. Wash spaces | 31. New type pole foremast | 39. Watch officer's cabin |
| 4. Sergeants of marines mess | 11. Twin 4-inch anti-aircraft guns | 18. Admiral's barge | 24. No. 1 boiler room | 32. Main director tower | 40. Petty officer's reading room |
| 5. Engineers' fitting shop | 12. Gun room pantry | 19. Multiple pom-pom anti-aircraft guns | 25. Director towers | 33. Captain's shelter | 41. General reading room |
| 6. No. 5 boiler room | 13. Mess space | 20. Multiple pom-pom anti-aircraft guns | 26. 44-inch searchlight | 34. Chart house | 42. Ship's galleys |
| 7. Aircraft cranes port & starboard | 14. Warrant officers' mess | | 27. Vents | 35. Searchlight | 43. Mess space |
| | | | 28. Twin 4-inch anti-aircraft guns | 36. Remote control office | 44. Hammock storage central store |
| | | | 29. Starboard | | |



- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 45. Fuel tank | 54. Multiple machine-guns | 60. Hammock storage | 68. Stores | 77. Chief petty officers' mess | |
| 46. Compass platform | 55. B-turret & 15-inch guns | 61. Lower wireless compartment | 69. Enclosed messes port & starboard | 78. Shipwrights' working space | |
| 47. Admiral's bridge | 56. Aircraft identification markings | 62. A-turret & 15-inch guns | 70. Operating theatre | 79. Fresh water tank | |
| 48. Conning tower | 57. Electric light stores | 63. Pantry | 71. Sick bay | 80. Cold chamber | |
| 49. Shelter deck | 58. Chief stokers' & mechanics' mess | 64. Petty officers' mess | 72. Open space | 81. Anchor cables | |
| 50. Gyro-adjusting room | 59. Mess space | 65. Reading room | 73. Clothing issue | 82. Seamen's head | |
| 51. Upper deck | | 66. Mess space | 74. Cloak room | 83. Lobby | |
| 52. Main deck | | 67. Wash space | 75. Flour store | 84. Boatswains' store | |
| 53. Medical distributing station | | | 76. Lobby | 85. Spare cables | |
| | | | | 86. Canvas & cordage room | |
| | | | | 87. Provision room | |
| | | | | 88. Awning stowage | |
| | | | | 89. Capstan gear | |



Above The Imperial Russian battleship *Tsarevitch* in 1904. After defeat in the Battle of the Yellow Sea, the *Tsarevitch* sought refuge at Tsingtao, but was then interned.

the torpedo-boat menace. Initially these were mainly mechanically operated, large-calibre machine-guns, such as the four-barrelled 25.4mm (1-inch) Nordenfelt. These were replaced by heavier weapons as the effective range of torpedoes increased, including the five-barrelled 37mm (1.45-inch) Hotchkiss revolver cannon, firing 43 rounds per minute to a maximum effective range of 1,800 metres (2,000 yards).

Ammo and fire control

At much the same time, ever-more sophisticated breech-loading guns were coming into service, aided by developments in ammunition. Arguably the most important of these was the introduction of new explosives. In the early 1890s, all major navies adopted similar smokeless propellants and new explosives such as TNT for shell fillings. Shell design made equally dramatic advances as a variety of armour-piercing rounds were developed.

Whilst the final decades of the 19th century saw tremendous advances in naval artillery, the techniques of aiming and fire control were little different from those of the Napoleonic Wars. By the 1880s, the stage was reached where the theoretical range of the new guns was impossible to exploit because of these primitive techniques. The situation began to improve in the 1890s with the development of the

Barr & Stroud coincidence rangefinder and the Zeiss stereoscopic rangefinder, both of which were steadily developed to cope with the ever-increasing range of the latest guns.

All this took time – the US Navy's gunnery during the Spanish-American War of 1898 was abysmal. In the Battle of Manila Bay, the first major naval action of the war, it achieved a hit rate of only 2.5%, whilst at the Battle of Santiago de Cuba this dropped to 1.5%. A year later, the Royal Navy was still carrying out target practice at ranges of no more than 1,600 yards and achieving an average hit rate of 30%.

The test of battle: Tsushima, 1905

The first indications of a new professionalism in naval gunnery were evident at the Battle of Tsushima in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War. The Russian fleet opened fire at the unprecedented range of 7,000 metres (7,655 yards), scoring a hit on the Japanese flagship *Mikasa* at 5,500 metres.

Much of the action took place at ranges of about 4,500 metres (4,971 yards), allowing the Japanese to exploit the superiority of their 1903 Barr & Stroud FA3 coincidence rangefinders, which had a range of 5,500 metres (6,000 yards) – whereas the Russian Liuzhol rangefinders dating from the 1880s had a range of only about 3,700 metres (4,000 yards).

In contrast to the poorly trained Russian gun crews, the Japanese had constantly carried out practice 'shoots' using sub-calibre adapters, which gave them a distinct edge in action. The bulk of Japanese ammunition comprised HE shells filled with the powerful picric acid-based explosives shimose and melinite, designed to explode on contact and wreck the upper structures of ships. The Russians used armour-piercing rounds with small guncotton bursting charges and unreliable fuses.

Captain Vladimir Semenov of the Russian flagship *Suvorov* wrote that: 'Shells seemed to be pouring upon us incessantly, one after another... Shimose and melinite were to a certain extent old acquaintances, but this was something new. It seemed as if these were mines, not shells, which were striking the ship's side and falling on the deck.

'They burst as soon as they touched anything – the moment they encountered the least impediment in their flight. Handrails, funnel guys, topping lifts of the boats' derricks were quite sufficient to cause a thoroughly efficient burst. The steel plates and superstructure on the upper deck were torn to pieces, and the splinters caused many casualties. Iron ladders were crumpled up into rings, and guns were literally hurled from their mountings.

'In addition to this, there was the unusual high temperature and liquid flame of the explosion, which seemed to spread over everything. I actually watched a steel plate catch fire from a burst. Of course, the steel did not burn, but the paint on it did. Such almost non-combustible materials as hammocks, and rows of boxes, drenched with water, flared up in a moment. At times it was impossible to see anything with glasses, owing to everything being so distorted with the quivering, heated air.'

Dreadnoughts

The destruction of the Russian fleet at the Battle of Tsushima caused a world-wide sensation and spurred the development of naval weapons technology. The mixed calibre armament of both sides' battleships had caused fire-control problems. It had proved virtually impossible to distinguish the shell splashes caused by the 305mm (12-inch) guns from those of the 152mm (6-inch) secondary armament. This gave added impetus to existing studies for 'all big gun battleships', the first of which, HMS *Dreadnought*, entered service in 1906, closely followed by similar designs for the navies of the USA,

Germany, France, Russia, Italy, Japan, and Austria-Hungary.

The new vessels needed improved fire-control systems in order to exploit the full potential of their armament. Various systems were trialled, but arguably the most successful was the British director system linked to the Dreyer Table, a mechanical analogue computer. This allowed the fire of a battleship's main armament to be centrally controlled with far greater accuracy than the old practice of each turret operating independently.

Dreadnought's speed, firepower, and protection had rendered all previous battleships obsolete, but she herself was obsolescent by 1914, overtaken by the British 'super-Dreadnoughts' armed with 343mm (13.5-inch) and 380mm (15-inch) guns. Their foreign contemporaries were armed with a variety of guns ranging from 280mm (11-inch) to 355mm (14-inch) calibre.

Dreadnought had carried a secondary armament of 12-pdr (76mm) guns as a defence against torpedo-boats, but the increasing threat from longer-ranged torpedoes launched by larger destroyers forced the super-Dreadnoughts to adopt more powerful secondary armaments of 102mm (4-inch) or 152mm (6-inch) guns.

The test of battle: Jutland, 1916

Despite the enormous resources committed to the pre-1914 Anglo-German naval race, the expectation

The liquid flame of the explosion seemed to spread over everything – I watched a steel plate catch fire from a burst.'

Captain Vladimir Semenov

Battle of Tsushima

of the war opening with a titanic naval action, a modern Trafalgar, was confounded. Almost two years were to pass before the indecisive Battle of Jutland, the only full-scale naval action of the First World War.

The battle demonstrated the effectiveness of the new fire-control systems; even in poor visibility, HMS *Barham* hit the German battlecruiser *Von der Tann* at a range of 17 kilometres (11 miles). The gunnery of Admiral Jellicoe's Grand Fleet deeply impressed the Germans – Admiral Scheer recalled that: 'The entire arc stretching from north to east was a sea of fire. The flash from the muzzles of the guns was distinctly seen through the mist and smoke though the ships themselves were not distinguishable.'

A midshipman aboard the battleship HMS *Neptune* remembered that it was: '... a curious sensation being under heavy fire at a long range. The time of flight seems more like 30 minutes than the 30 or so seconds that it actually is. A great

rippling gush of flame breaks out from the enemy's guns some miles away, and then follows a pause, during which one can reflect that somewhere in that great "no man's land" two or three tons of metal and explosive are hurtling towards one.

'The mountainous splashes which announce the arrival of each successive salvo rise simultaneously in bunches of four or five to an immense height. One or two salvos fell short of us early in the action, and the remainder, I suppose, must have gone over, as I did not see them.

'The Hercules, four ships astern of us, had been straddled on deployment, a feat which had greatly impressed me with the capabilities of the German gunnery, but, with the exception of the Colossus, which received a 12-inch shell in the fore-superstructure and sundry small stuff round about her fo'csle, no single ▶

Below HMS Dreadnought, the 1906 British 'all-big-gun' battleship that revolutionised naval warship design.



NAVAL GUNPOWER

battleship suffered any real damage from the Germans' gunfire.

'The enemy, however, clearly received some punishment as two battle-cruisers, which were rather closer than were their other ships, were engaged by us and by most ships of the rear squadron at one time or another, and we saw at least two of our salvos hit, after which the two enemy battle-cruisers dropped astern, to all appearances badly damaged. The warm, red glow of a "hit" is easily distinguishable from the flash of a salvo, and is extremely pleasant to look upon.'

Obsolete shells

Weaknesses on both sides contributed to the battle's indecisive outcome – German armour-piercing shells were far more effective than their British equivalents, which often failed to penetrate heavy armour.

The issue particularly concerned shells striking at oblique angles, which was generally the case at long range. Germany had adopted TNT as a shell filling in 1902, whilst the British still used the picric-acid based Lyddite. The shock of impact against armour often prematurely detonated Lyddite-filled shells, but TNT was more resistant and allowed delayed-action fuses to operate efficiently, detonating shells after they had penetrated the target's armour.

The poor performance of British shells had been known to Jellicoe, who as Third Sea Lord between 1908 and 1910 had ordered new ones to be designed. The matter had not been followed through after his posting to sea, however, and the new shells had never been thoroughly tested.

Admiral Beatty discovered the problem at a party aboard HMS *Lion* soon after

the battle, where a Swedish naval officer mentioned that he had recently visited Berlin, where the German Navy had scoffed at how British shells had broken up on their ships' armour. Admiral Hipper later commented that: 'It was nothing but the poor quality of their bursting charges which saved us from disaster.'

Dead-end

Although the 15-inch gun was the largest calibre to see widespread service, a British 18-inch was produced. Two of these were intended to arm the 'large light cruiser' *Furious*, but trials showed that her light structure could not take the tremendous recoil and blast as each 1,510kg (3,320lb) shell was fired. She was accordingly earmarked for conversion to an aircraft carrier and two 18-inch guns were fitted to the monitors *General Wolfe* and *Lord Clive* in 1918.

Right The HMS *Queen Mary* explodes during the Battle of Jutland.

They briefly saw action in the naval-gunfire support role in the last weeks of the war. The *General Wolfe* made naval history by bombarding a railway bridge at Snaeskerke at a range of 32,918 metres (36,000 yards) – the heaviest shell fired from the largest gun at the longest range in action to date. The 18-inch would prove to be a technological 'dead-end'. But as WWI ended, there were pointers to the true future of naval warfare. The Sopwith Cuckoo, the first purpose-designed torpedo-bomber, entered operational service in 1918 on the aircraft carrier *Argus*, and a strike by 120 aircraft on the anchorages of the German High Seas Fleet was being planned as the war ended. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Porter became an author after working for the MOD for almost 30 years – nine of his books on the Second World War have been published, together with numerous magazine articles.

AUGUST 2013

OnManoeuvres

LISTINGS | WAR ZONE



August There is an interesting mix of events lined up for this August. A military-inspired vintage steam fair, a family day at HMS *Belfast* explaining dazzle camouflage, and a behind-the-scenes tour around five aircraft at the RAF museum guided by the curator, to name just three. Other highlights include the Dunsfold Wings and Wheels show, the Michelham Priory WWII

Day, and the Military Museum Eastbourne's lecture on the Victoria Cross.

For our Warzone analysis David Tatterfield of The Western Front Association reports from the Pope's Nose, Thiepval. The spot was a crucial German salient during the Battle of the Somme and is now one of the most visited areas of the Western Front.



Listings

64



66

DATES TO REMEMBER

FAMILY EVENT



Past at the Priory

Michelham Priory is holding its annual WWII day on Wednesday 21 August 2013. This event, originally designed for children, is growing larger each year, and now attracts lots of adults as well as families on their summer holidays.

Michelham Priory has a strong WWII heritage, having housed evacuees in 1939 (some of whom still visit the Priory), and then both Canadian and British troops. It also acted as a hospital for the wounded or unwell.

At the WWII day, there will be vehicles and wartime artefacts on display, and 1940s dancing led by 'Viv the Spiv', who may also try to sell you some of his black-market items!

Michelham Priory WWII Day
21 August 2013

Michelham Priory
Upper Dicker
East Sussex, BN27 3Q5

01273 486260

www.sussexpast.co.uk

**£7.50
ENTRY**

MUSEUM TOUR



Inside knowledge

Come and listen to the RAF Museum Curator talk about five particular aircraft, covering how they have come to be at the museum, how they are conserved, and their individual career history. You will then have time with each machine to take 'up close and personal' photography in the best lighting conditions possible. There will also be people to hand with personal experience of flying or engineering these aircraft, and who can answer your probing questions.

In Focus: Meet the Curator
16 August 2013

Royal Air Force Museum London
Graname Park Way
London, NW9 5LL

020 8205 2266

www.rafmuseum.org.uk

**£25
ENTRY**

EVENT

Witness the past

Only once a year, the Royal Air Force Museum London hosts a special event, the Royal Air Force Museum London's annual 'Witness the Past' event. This event is a unique opportunity to see and hear about the history of the Royal Air Force. It is a chance to see and hear about the history of the Royal Air Force. It is a chance to see and hear about the history of the Royal Air Force.



**£20
ADVANCE**

01483 49222

www.rafmuseum.org.uk

LECTURE

A cemetery's story

During the summer of 2005, whilst serving in Basra, Iraq, Vern Littley – a serving soldier – had the opportunity to visit both the Basra War Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing. This presentation is to show you what he saw and to tell you about the impact that it had on him, both as a soldier and as a battlefield tour guide.



Vern Littley, The Basra CWGC War Cemetery

Newcastle Methodist Church
Merral Street, ST5 2AD

01484531412

www.westernfrontassociation.com

**£5
ENTRY**

CONFLICT ARCHAEOLOGY

Digging for Lawrence

Looking forward to late October... there are still a few places left on this year's Great Arab Revolt archaeological expedition to southern Jordan. Now in its eighth year, this pioneering project is exploring the railway stations, hilltop forts, military camps, and guerrilla-war battlefields of 1916-1918.

Work this year will focus on the heavily contested desert oasis of Mudawwara, recovering evidence for battles involving the Imperial Camel Corps, the Hijaz Armoured Car Company, the Royal Flying Corps, and Lawrence of Arabia himself.

The price covers the full two-week field trip, including flights, three-star hotels, in-country transport, meals, and insurance.

Great Arab Revolt Project
27 October–10 November 2013

Susan Daniels
GARP Administrator
3 Millers Croft
Coprnanthorpe
York, YO23 3TW



**£2,550
ALL IN**

☎ 07815 570507
🌐 www.jordan1914-18archaeology.org

FAMILY DAY



Courageous creatures

Find out more about the surprising and courageous roles played by animals during war and conflict. Hear about members of the animal kingdom who helped us win the Great War, meet some four-legged military mascots and working animals, and learn how animals have always played their part in military campaigns and continue to serve within the Armed Forces today.

Animals in War

11 August 2013

IWM Duxford
Cambridgeshire CB22 4QR

☎ 01223 835000
🌐 www.iwm.org

**£18.50
ENTRY**

LECTURE

History of the VC

The Victoria Cross holds a fascination for speaker Mark Smith, who has spent the last nine years studying the



history and origins of the Cross itself.

This talk will explore in some detail his findings, which will be illustrated with stories about the awards and with real artefacts.

Mark joined the Civil Service in 1982 and has held posts within RAF Logistics and Movement, Defence Intelligence and Finance Policy. Since 2004, Mark has held the position of Curator of the Royal Artillery Museum.

The Victoria Cross

4 August 2013

Military Museum Eastbourne
Esplanade, BN22 7AQ

☎ 01323 410300
🌐 www.eastbournemuseums.co.uk

**£12
ENTRY**

EVENT



LET OFF SOME STEAM

The Gloucestershire Steam and Vintage Extravaganza, now in its 39th year, will take place once again at South Cerney Airfield, Cirencester. The event, which hosts a large number of military vehicles, including messengers' motorcycles and front-line armoured divisions, should attract more than 15,000 visitors and raise money for local and national charities. The show has grown dramatically in recent years and is now widely regarded as one of the biggest and best Steam, Vintage and Countryside events in the UK.

**FROM
£7**

For more information
contact the organisers
on 01295 251111

01295 251111
01295 251111

FAMILY DAY

Vanishing act

How do you hide a ship at sea? Learn how 'dazzle camouflage' was used to keep HMS *Belfast* from being discovered by other ships, and take part in an animation workshop to create your own camouflage. Drop-in events are suitable for all ages with parental supervision.

Dazzle Camouflage

10-18 August 2013

HMS *Belfast*
The Queen's Walk
London, SE1 2JH

**FROM
£10.15**

☎ 020 7940 6300
🌐 www.iwm.org





Attacking the Pope's Nose

David Tattersfield of the Western Front Association assesses a failed attack on a crucial German salient during the Battle of the Somme.

Virtually every town and village in the UK lost men during the First World War. The Battle of the Somme, July-November 1916, was, for many communities, the battle that caused the greatest number of names to be added to local war memorials. The village of Ravensthorpe, near Dewsbury, in the industrial heart

of the West Riding of Yorkshire, was one such community.

The British and Commonwealth forces had continually attacked the German lines since the opening attack on 1 July and, despite the unprecedented casualties incurred on the first day, managed to make some significant progress during July and August. This success, although costly, was mainly at

Above Peaceful fields now, but during the Battle of the Somme this area saw the most intense fighting. The ridge on which the imposing Thiepval Memorial to the Missing now stands commands the battlefield for miles around. The village of Thiepval was utterly destroyed in the war, and nothing remains of the magnificent Thiepval chateau, which would have stood on the slopes in front of the trees. The photograph is taken from Mill Road Cemetery.

the southern end of the battlefield.

In the north, comparatively little progress had been made. Thiepval, which stood on a prominent ridge, had been surrounded on three sides by the end of August, but was still holding out. It had become an annoying salient jutting into the British lines. By holding onto the village, the Germans were able to prevent the British from occupying the whole of the ridge from Thiepval down to Pozières. A renewed attempt to take Thiepval was therefore planned for 3 September. This attack was to take place using three divisions, one of which was the 49th (West Riding) Division.

The 49th Division was to have two brigades making the attack: 146 Brigade on the left, and 147 Brigade on the right. 146 Brigade had the 1/8th West Yorkshire Regiment on the left of the assault, and the 1/6th West Yorkshires on the right. 147 Brigade attacked with the 1/5th Duke of Wellington's Regiment on the left, and the 1/4th Duke of Wellington's on the right.

Below Mill Road Cemetery, which stands on the edge of the Schwaben Redoubt. The headstones are, unusually, laid flat due to the unstable nature of the ground, caused by the network of German tunnels.





The men of Ravensthorpe

The 1/5th Dukes, which contained many men from Ravensthorpe, were to go over the top from new trenches dug in front of the original ones on 1 July. These were named the First, Second, and Third Parallels, and were described as rough, but deep and narrow. Two trenches ran from the Second and Third Parallels, heading straight towards the German front-line: these were Koyli West Trench (just inside the 1/6th West Yorkshires' area) and Koyli East Trench.

At 5.30pm on Saturday 2 September the 1/5th Dukes left the village of Forceville and commenced the march to the front line. After crossing the River Ancre at Authuille, they assembled ready for the assault in the Second and Third Parallels at 3.45am.

The battalion's plan, prepared by the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel H A J Stanton, was for 'D' and 'A' Companies (on the left and right of the battalion's front respectively) to capture the German front line between Points 16 and 54 (see map). The German defences here were particularly strong: a German salient called the Pope's Nose was located at the top of Koyli East Trench, the apex of which was at Point 25. The German support line was to be captured by 'B' Company between Points 38 and 66. 'C' Company was in reserve.

Meanwhile, the 1/6th West Yorkshires on the left had to tackle a strong trench system called 'The Triangle', between Points 16, 09, and 67. The 1/4th Dukes on the right had to take the front line from Points 54 to 84, and the support line from Points 66 to 95.

The British hurricane bombardment commenced at 5.10am on 3 September, dawn having broken at about 5am. A survivor said 'The whole sky seemed to light

Above Mill Road Cemetery, with the Ulster Tower among the trees in the background. This is on a slight crest, which gave the Germans commanding views of the British attack.

Above right Thiepval Memorial to the Missing. This commemorates over 70,000 British soldiers who were killed during the Battle of the Somme, but have no known grave.

up suddenly.' At 5.13am the battalion, after hours of nervous waiting, went over the top along with the rest of the West Riding Division, for the first time in the war.

Attack of the 1/5th Battalion

The war diary of the 1/5th Dukes describes in two sentences the result of the attack: 'The whole attack failed. The 146 Brigade did not reach its objective and although the 147 Brigade reached their objective, they were unable to hold it.' The details of what actually occurred are more difficult to establish, especially as each battalion blamed its neighbour.

'D' Company of the 1/5th Dukes was to attack astride Koyli East Trench. Unfortunately one platoon, instead of assaulting on both sides of the trench, managed to end up entirely on the eastern side. This left a gap in the middle of the company which was due to attack at Point 25 – the Pope's Nose. The war diary states, 'This would not have mattered if the battalion on our left [1/6th West Yorkshires] had reached its objective. As it was "D" Company had to withstand bombing attacks on its left, from its centre, and later on, from its right.'

Although half of 'D' Company did manage to occupy the front-line trench between Points 16 and 25, it was impossible to bring ammunition up to them, due, according to the war diary, to the German block at the top of Koyli East Trench. This resulted in everything having to go over no-man's-land, in the face of the ferocious enemy barrage. This

inability to cross no-man's-land was to cause many casualties. It also prevented orders being brought up, messages getting back, casualty evacuation, and reinforcements of both men and ammunition.

The other half of 'D' Company, to the right (east of Point 25) did receive ammunition at about 7.30am. Even further to the right, 'A' Company of the 1/5th Dukes became mixed up with the left company of the 1/4th Dukes. This caused a lot of bunching between Points 25 and 54. A machine-gun was turned on these men, causing the company to split in two, leaving a gap near where the communication trench joined the front line, approximately midway between these points.

'B' Company assaulted the German support line, but only one third of the men – and probably no officers – seem to have reached it. Because of the casualties incurred and a lack of ammunition, they were unable to hold onto this position. After recapturing their support line, the Germans were able to come down the communication trench and, exploiting the gap the machine-gun had created, turn left and right to attack the men of 'A' and 'D' Companies in the German front-line.

The battalion's war diary reports that "D" Company only retired when they had no more bombs, having previously seen the troops on the right [1/4th Dukes and "A" Company of the 1/5th Dukes] retire to our front parallels. They retired from the German front-line about 9.30am'.

The History of the Sixth Battalion West

WAR ZONE

Right Connaught Cemetery, on the edge of Thiepval Wood. This contains graves of many men who were killed in the surrounding area during the Battle of the Somme, but is mainly associated with the losses incurred by the 36th (Ulster) Division, who attacked here on 1 July 1916.



Yorkshire Regiment, Volume One: 1/6th Battalion by Captain E V Tempest, DSO, MC, gives details of how, during the preparations for the attack, which would not have gone unnoticed by the Germans, platoons became exhausted in a matter of days. The men had to carry stores and ammunition up the steep sides of the Ancre valley to the front line nightly from 27 August. This lack of rest would have seriously impaired their fighting capabilities.

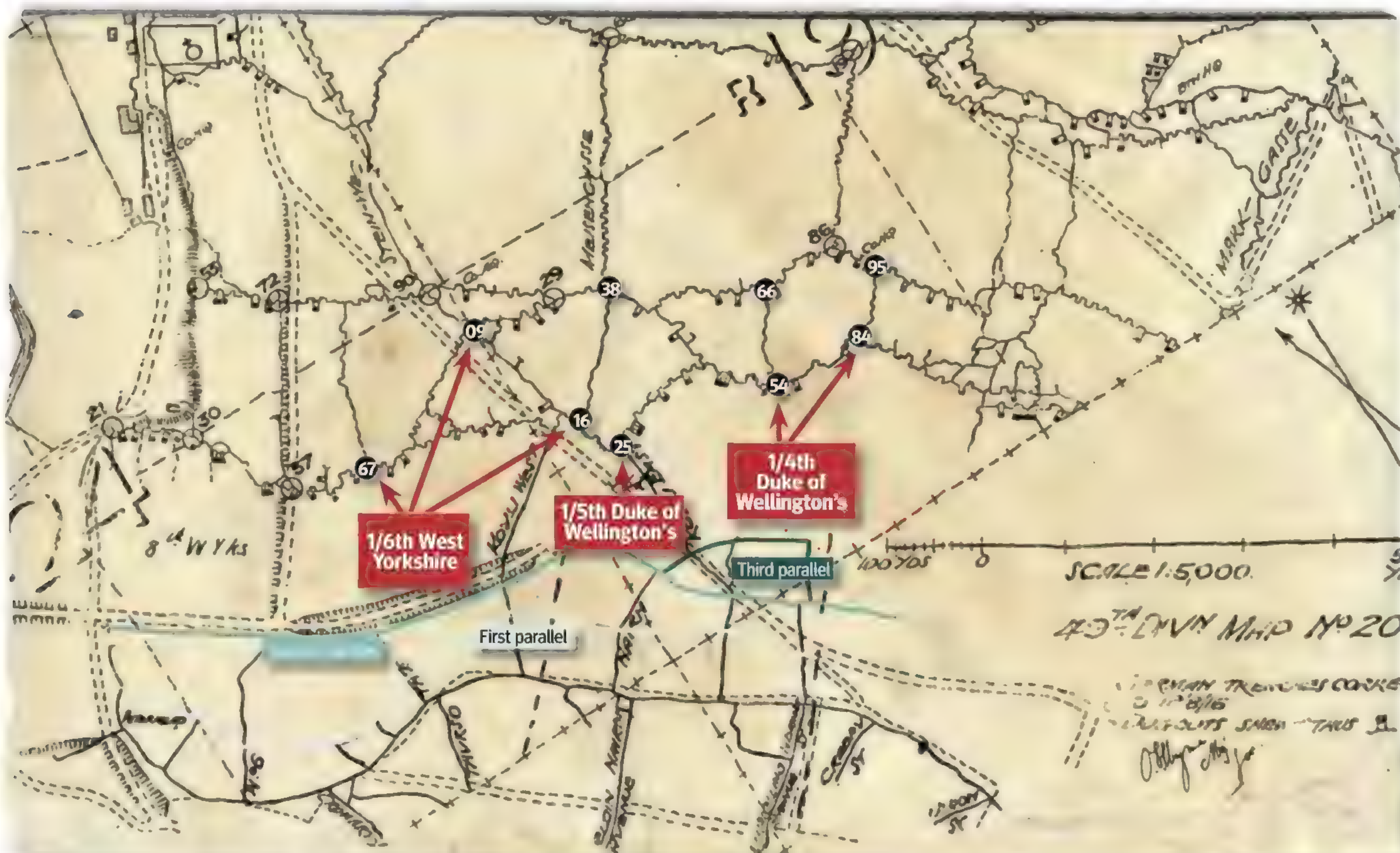
The book goes on to report that the Pope's Nose remained uncaptured, and that machine-guns from this position were able to pour fire into the flank of the 1/6th West Yorkshires. Although the first wave of this battalion managed to cross no-man's-land, following waves were unable to do so, and this battalion's attack failed early on.

What went wrong?

Clearly the Pope's Nose was the key to the whole attack. It seems that until it was temporarily abandoned, machine-gun fire from the area of the Pope's Nose enfiladed the 1/6th West Yorkshires, stopping their assault in its tracks. If 'D' Company of the 1/5th Dukes had advanced correctly up Koyli East Trench, it is possible that the Pope's Nose may have been subdued earlier. Unfortunately, the 1/6th West Yorkshires were unable to restart their attack.

The deepest areas of penetration soon began to be counter-attacked, with the Germans being reinforced from the garrison in the Schwaben Redoubt – a series of tunnels situated in the high ground a few hundred yards east of the Pope's Nose. The 1/4th and the 1/5th Dukes, running out of ammunition and down to a fraction of their original strength, were unable to resist and fell back. The Pope's Nose was reoccupied by the Germans and machine-guns were brought to bear on the retreating troops. Many were killed as they tried to return to the comparative safety of the parallels.

Below 49th Division Map, Number 20, from the National Archives. This shows the area attacked by the 1/5th Battalion, Duke of Wellington's Regiment, on 3 September 1916, with points referred to in the text.



All the gains were abandoned. Virtually the only British who remained in the German lines were either dead or injured. Only seven unwounded prisoners were captured by the Germans from the 1/4th and 1/5th Battalions of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.

The Pope's Nose today

The battlefield today is one of the most visited areas of the Western Front. The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing is close by, and on the other side of the valley are the preserved trenches of the Newfoundland Memorial Park. There are two cemeteries nearby. The Connaught Cemetery now contains 1,278 burials, half of whom are 'unknown'. Only 36 of the 113 officers and men killed on 3 September in the 1/5th Duke of Wellington's have known graves; 28, including all three officers with known graves, are buried at Mill Road Cemetery, which is on the edge of the Schwaben Redoubt. Because of the unstable nature of the ground, many of the headstones have had to be laid flat. The cemetery contains 1,304 graves; 815 of them are unknown.

Precisely over the 1/5th Dukes line of attack has been built a tall memorial tower to the Ulster Division. This is one of the most famous landmarks on the Somme, and the front walls of the grounds are on the approximate site of

Koyli East Trench. Just to the left of the tower is a fork in the road, one branch being a rough track that leads down to St Pierre Divion. By walking along the track you will be parallel to, and slightly west of, Koyli East Trench. After 130 yards on your right, a few feet into the field, are the remains of a machine-gun post. While this is probably not the apex of the Pope's Nose, it is likely to have been part of this position, possibly the post at Point 16. The head of Koyli East Trench is about halfway between the remains of the post and a fork in the road.

None of the original front and support lines that the 1/4th and the 1/5th Dukes attacked can now be seen. However, by walking up the lefthand side of the Memorial Tower grounds, at the rear of the tower you come to a patch of uncultivated ground. The high ground of the Schwaben Redoubt and the Mill Road Cemetery is away to the right. To the left the ground drops away towards the German support-line, but straight ahead is the approximate site of Point 54.

In front of the Tower is a small electricity substation. At this point the Third Parallel cut across the road. By standing in the road, looking towards the fork in the road, you will be facing the direction of the attack which commenced at 5.13am on 3 September 1916, from which many men never returned. ☛

Below The detritus of war. Some of the empty shell-cases and other remnants of battle that are kept near the Ulster Tower visitors' centre. Tours of nearby Thiepval Wood and the complex of trenches occupied by the British set off from the visitors' centre most days during the summer months.



GO

EXPLORE



The Western Front Association is a registered charity dedicated to remembering those from all sides who served their countries in the Great War.

Members (and non-members) are invited to come along to any of our 50 branches in the UK and Ireland. These branches hold monthly meetings, often with leading experts talking on a wide range of First World War-related subjects.

The WFA has become involved in saving vital resources including the First World War Medal Index Cards – which detail the medals awarded to every soldier in the British Army. In recent years, the WFA also made a substantial donation to ensure the Imperial War Museum's sound archives were digitised before they decayed beyond use.

Most recently, the WFA has saved the First World War Pension Record Cards and Ledgers – these are a vital resource for research into military personnel who served in the Great War.

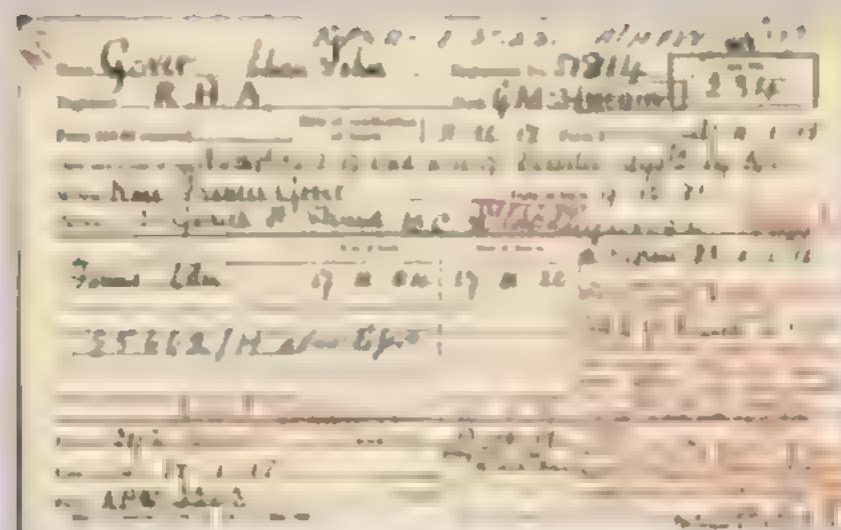
In the 1990s, the WFA reinstigated the tradition of holding an annual service of remembrance at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, on 11 November. This attracts increasing numbers of the public wishing to mark the moment the Armistice was signed.

The WFA has recently engaged with the British Government and persuaded them to ensure the centenary commemorations include the Battle of Amiens in August 1918, a largely forgotten battle that turned the tide of the war and paved the way to the Allied victory.

WFA members receive six high-quality magazines a year, and also a monthly electronic newsletter.

With over 6,000 members throughout the world, our membership is growing as interest in the First World War increases. We invite anyone who wishes to learn more about this fascinating period of history to join us.

For more info visit www.westernfrontassociation.com



Above One of the First World War Pension Record Cards saved by the WFA.



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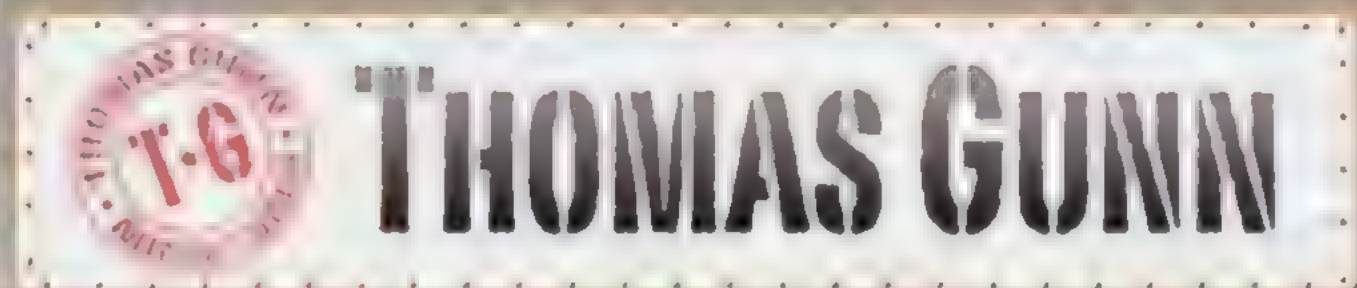
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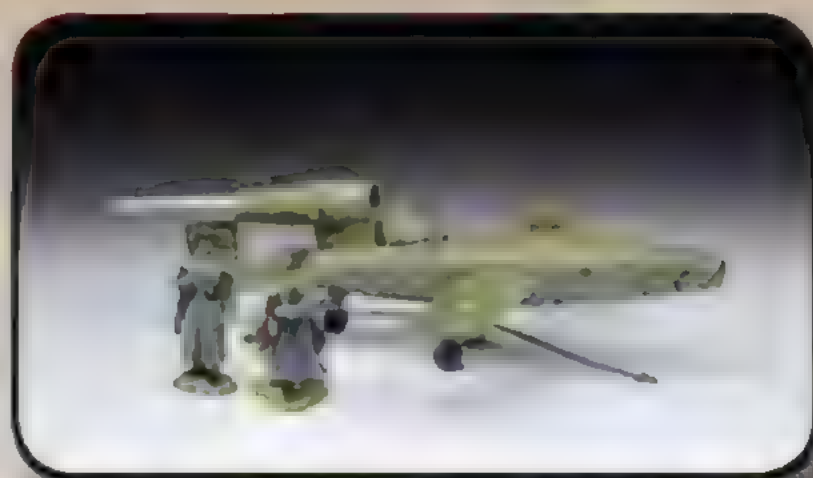
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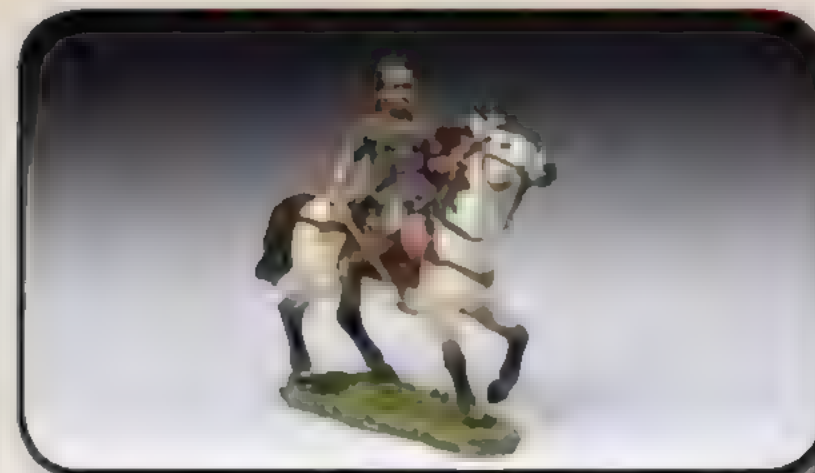
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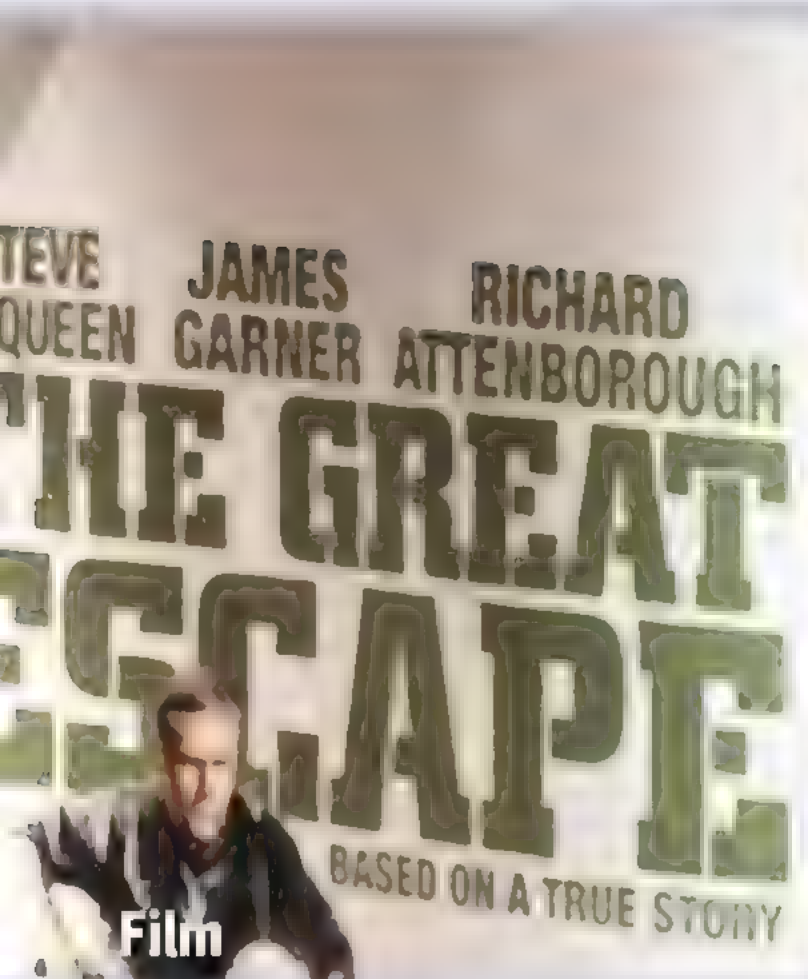
MHMReviews

FILM | BOOKS



August Nicholas J Saunders has edited an excellent new study of modern conflict archaeology in *Beyond the Dead Horizon*, our lead review this month. Retired RAF Squadron Leader Colin Pomeroy reviews Merfyn Bourne's *The Second World War in the Air*, and Jules Stewart looks at *Why Germany Nearly Won the War* by Steven D Mercatante, who discusses what gave Germany the advantage between 1939 and 1941.

To celebrate the recent re-release of one of the greatest ever war films, *The Great Escape*, MHM reviews the film and the launch night held at the Churchill War Rooms, which featured a Q&A with Air Commodore Charles Clarke OBE, a veteran and survivor of Stalag Luft 111 prisoner war camp.



Film



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Books

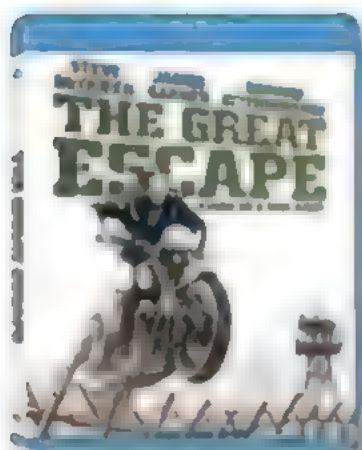
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FILM

THE GREAT ESCAPE 50th anniversary blu-ray



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The Churchill War Rooms recently played host to a special screening of well-loved wartime classic *The Great Escape*. With a cast

boasting the likes of Steve McQueen, Richard Attenborough, and James Garner, 1960s Hollywood somehow managed to inject its signature glamour, albeit a slightly gritty version, into this prisoner-of-war epic. However, at the viewing, which was held to celebrate the movie's 50th anniversary and launch to Blu-ray format, it was clear that the true star of the event was guest of honour Air Commodore Charles Clarke OBE – a prisoner at Stalag Luft III, where the real escape took place almost 70 years ago.

After being shot down during an attack in Schweinfurt, Air Commodore Clarke was sent to an interrogation centre at Dulag Luft, and was later transported to Stalag Luft III. He was 20 years old. He remembers, 'It was snowing at the time. There was snow on the ground, and the huts were not as close together [as they

were in the film]. There were no doors in the side of the buildings, making it hard to move between them without being seen.'

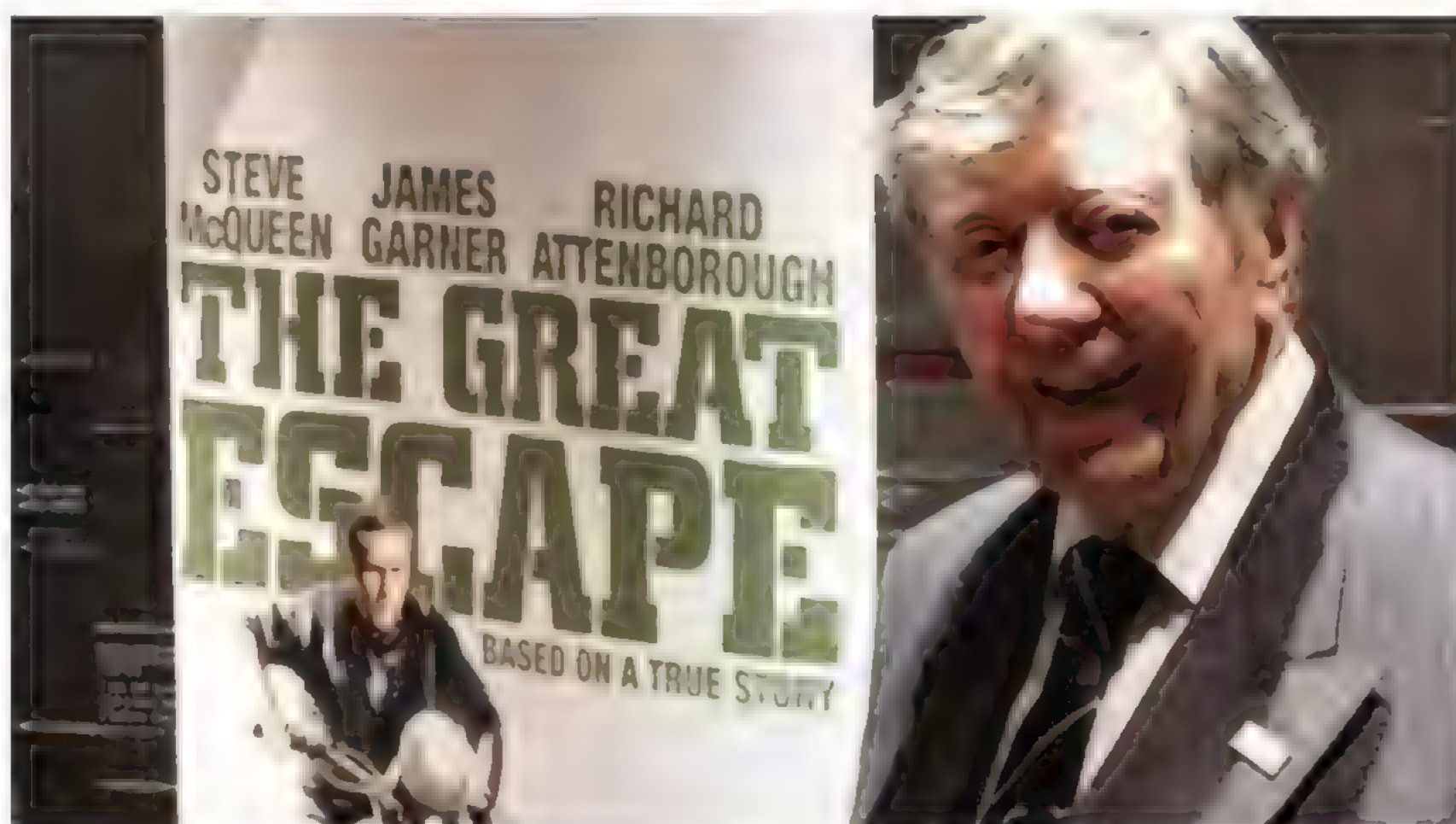
The plan to escape was an ambitious one, aiming to get 250 men out of the high-security camp by way of three tunnels, named Tom, Dick, and Harry. The men would emerge on the other side of the camp's barbed-wire fencing and into the woods beyond. In the end, only one tunnel was completed, and 76 men embraced dangerously fragile freedom. Of those who escaped, a mere three avoided recapture, while 50 were rounded up and executed by a German machine-gun.

At times in the movie the German guards are painted as being easily outwitted. When asked whether or not this was an accurate portrayal, Air Commodore Clarke responded, 'The guards were not stupid. They were cunning and sharp. Only certain people were allowed to speak to them.' However, he feels that, overall, they were probably fair. 'There were no beatings, although there was a shooting ... no doubt there was a relationship between guard and prisoner.'

In all, Clarke spent nearly a year-and-a-half imprisoned, but reported, 'Some of the chaps were there for nearly five years.' When they finally left the camp in 1945, a gruelling long march was in store. 'We left in January, and Russia was 20 to 30 miles away. We marched for 36 hours in a blizzard, carrying everything we had.' When they stopped, they were not sheltered, and, Clarke recalls, 'We were rather afraid we might be bombed by our own people.'

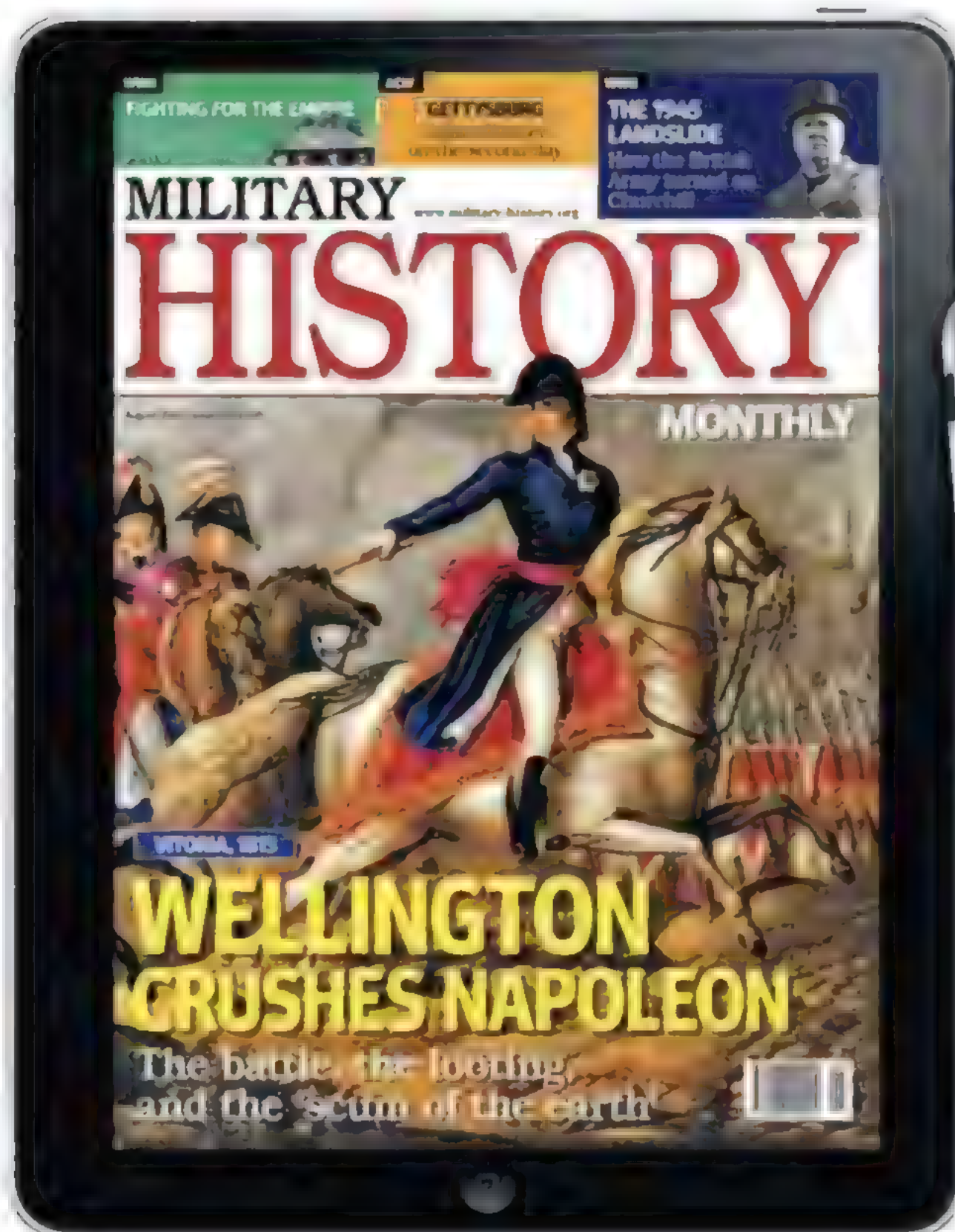
In March this year, Clarke was awarded a golden Bomber Command clasp, presented by Prime Minister David Cameron at 10 Downing Street. Describing the film's version of events as 'chocolate box-y', Clarke joked that he felt 'tempted to go back for another'. On a more serious note, however, he also posed the question, 'Whatever you think of the film, without it, who would remember the 50 murdered?' And fittingly, as the military snare drum rolls to punctuate the film's final scene, the viewer is left with the caption, 'This picture is dedicated to the fifty.'

Erin Goodin



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BOOKS

*BEYOND THE DEAD HORIZON:
studies in modern conflict archaeology*

Nicholas J Saunders (ed.)

Oxbow, £38

ISBN 978-1842174715

'Modern conflict archaeology focuses on the idea of conflict as a multifaceted phenomenon,' writes Bristol University's Nick Saunders in his introduction to this collection of research papers by new scholars engaged in developing archaeological approaches to the study of modern war.

Conflict, argues Saunders, 'may leave a variety of physical traces in many different places, all or most of which can possess multiple meanings that may change over time.' He is at pains to stress that modern conflict archaeology is not 'battlefield archaeology', let alone battlefield looting for gain or the TV cameras: 'the reader will search in vain for papers dealing with the opportunistic digging of battlefields, the counting of musket balls, the search for First World War cap badges, or altimeters and propellers from crashed Second World War aeroplanes.'

The volume contains an extraordinarily wide-ranging set of papers, reflecting the degree to which the Bristol-based researchers are choosing to define what is, in fact, 'a new hybrid sub-discipline which

draws on the knowledge and insights of a diversity of academic subjects that, besides anthropology, includes cultural studies, cultural geography, military history, art history, museum studies, and tourism and cultural-heritage studies.'

The best way to convey the vitality of modern conflict archaeology is to list the subjects covered: a great-grandfather's 'Dead Man's Penny' and its place in the researcher's family history; the tense relationship between poppy and harp in Irish memorialisation of the First World War; the human body as 'a unique kind of conflict materiality'; an American Doughboy's diary as 'a textual artefact of the First World War'; a British soldier-artist's picture diary of his war service; the excavation of a battlefield model representing Messines; American memorials to the First World War dead; the 'gendered objects' produced by Boer POWs on Bermuda in 1901-1902; a First World War wireless station that has survived as a garden shed; Second World War graffiti in British air-raid shelters; the archaeology of the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay in the early 1930s; a study of military arboglyphs (tree-carvings) on Salisbury Plain; the 'sense-scape' represented by soldiers' bodily experiences in the trenches; a comparison between Hadrian's Wall and the Hejaz Railway that interprets both as 'macro-linear features' forming imperial boundaries; and studies of Second World War coastal defences at Weymouth, a Cold War early-warning site in Germany, the Nevada Test Site in 'America's nuclear wasteland', and the underwater 'conflict seascape of the Baltic'.

The range is astonishing. It banishes any sense that conflict archaeology is just a crude adjunct to military history whereby metal-detected 'buttons and bullets' are used to fine-tune written accounts. Paul Cornish, an Imperial War Museum historian and curator – and therefore a scholar with a foot in both camps – stresses this in his conclusion. Lamenting the failure of historians to engage with material (he says he can count on the fingers of one hand the number of military

Modern conflict archaeology is not 'battlefield archaeology', let alone battlefield looting for gain or the TV cameras.

historians who have taken the opportunity to actually handle the weapons they write about during his 20 years as a curator), he implies that the problem has been a one-dimensional focus on 'military history' narrowly defined.

But things are changing. 'A new generation of scholars are looking at warfare in a more holistic way than has previously been the case. Moreover, they are investigating areas in which a multi-disciplinary approach, with due weight being accorded to material culture as evidence is likely to be profitable.' This is opening up whole new vistas of understanding: 'historians have begun to apply themselves to that most interesting area of study at the juncture between war and culture – how our culture was changed by the war, and how our memory of the war has developed. As much of this culture manifested itself in material ways, the potential value of material culture studies to this new wave of war history is obvious.'

The new sub-discipline of modern conflict archaeology is an infant. The small but growing community of scholars engaged in it are still groping towards the big themes that will synthesise their diverse individual studies. What matters now, however, is the sheer range of material they are embracing, and the imaginative conceptual repertoire they are deploying to analyse it. On the evidence of this volume, Bristol's archaeology department is cutting a deep furrow through new ground.

Neil Faulkner



The Second World War in the Air: the story of air combat in every theatre of World War Two

Merfyn Bourne

Matador, £15.99

ISBN 978-1780884417



Merfyn Bourne has produced a most readable book covering the war in the air during WWII. Rather than taking each theatre and covering it as a

whole, the author has cleverly covered the war years in a chronological order, returning to the different theatres of combat as the war develops.

After a rather laboured introduction, the book sets the scene for the 1939-1945 combat. It first examines the Great War and its legacy, then the inter-war years and their influence on WWII, and finally sets the scene for the approaching conflict as international tension increased.

Thus it is not until chapter five that the story covering the period of the book's title actually commences. This main story starts with the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, and continues logically to the fall of France and the ensuing Battle of Britain, cleverly amalgamating a mixture of both the broad stories and specific activity of named pilots and their units. Bourne studies the strengths and weaknesses of the combatants and their air fleets, a theme he returns to regularly as the book progresses.

The story continues with the battles around the English Channel convoys and the early attempts at strategic bombing. We move on to Operation Barbarossa and the invasion of Russia, before studying the early months of the war in the Pacific and then the main allied bomber offensive in Europe, 1942-1943.

The Russian recovery from its disastrous months of retreat and combat losses follows, then the Allies' change of fortune in the war against Japan after numerous early setbacks. The Mediterranean air war is covered in full, after which the story is one of worldwide Allied success in the Pacific and North Africa, followed by the D-Day landings in Europe and Russia's advance westward towards Berlin.

The last three chapters embrace the final outcomes of the war in the West, East, and Pacific.

Sadly, the illustrations do not do credit to this otherwise commendable book, being rather few in number, small, and of indifferent quality.

Although excused in the introduction, the contribution to Allied victory by maritime air forces is a significant omission from Bourne's book. For example, not only is the anti-submarine war skipped over, no mention whatsoever is made of the significant contribution to victory by aircraft and crews of RAF Coastal Command's strike wings.

The three appendices to the book contain much in the way of interesting material, but I hardly think that the type of person who would read this 407-page book needs to have the basic physics of why an aeroplane flies explained to him!

In conclusion, this is a good, informative book that the basic student of the Second World War – formal or otherwise – would do well to read.

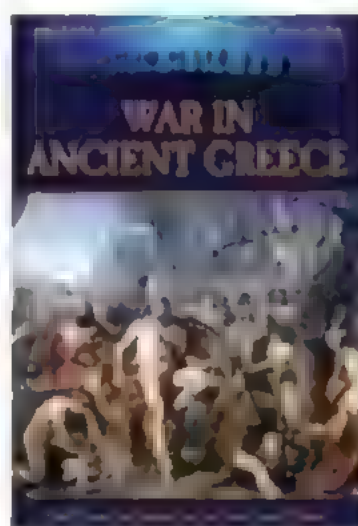
Colin Pomeroy

War in Ancient Greece (military history from primary sources)

Edited by Bob Carruthers

Pen and Sword Military, £14.99

ISBN 978-1781592175



The latest in Pen and Sword's series of 'Military History from Primary Sources', *War in Ancient Greece* is the complete text of fifth-century

historian Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*. This is among the very first ever works of military history – its author actually participated in the conflict between Athens and Sparta, albeit for a single campaign.

As countless historians have done since, Thucydides made the most, perhaps too much, of his limited military experience. He is an unforgiving historian and his intelligence and precision are obvious, even if his style is hard-going at times. His discussion of the causes of the war is sometimes tortuous, but his sophisticated understanding is way ahead of its time

Thucydides' account is not a perfect factual record of the conflict: there are chronological inconsistencies, while his reliance on oral accounts, his own opinions, and his reports of speeches – which are probably little more than creative writing – all mean that he should be read with some care.

Much of the information is, however, reliable, and his reporting of the Plague of Athens (430 BC) in chapter seven and his account of the Corcyraean Revolt of 427 BC in chapter ten are among the book's highlights.

So while he is less accessible than Herodotus, widely considered to be the 'Father of History', Thucydides can lay claim to being the first military historian. Indeed, Thucydides follows on from Herodotus, but not only are the two different in their approach, they come from different places in history: Herodotus was observing a triumphant Athens whilst Thucydides lived in an Athens in decline.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the *History of the Peloponnesian Wars* has been translated and reprinted numerous times. Pen and Sword's offering is just the most recent. And while its predecessors – such as those recently published by the Oxford University Press and Penguin – treat it as a work of classical literature, for Pen and Sword, it is military history.

The 'Military History from Primary Sources' has been a good series so far, and Bob Carruthers, the series editor, should be congratulated on making eye-witness and other primary accounts of warfare across the centuries readily accessible.

My expectations were therefore high. Unfortunately the editor does not do the subject justice here. The introduction is too brief and inadequately introduces classical warfare. It then fails completely to introduce Thucydides. There are no accompanying notes to the text and no index.

Although there are several maps and illustrations, these are not listed in the contents. As such, the Pen and Sword version does come a relatively poor second to the 'classical' versions.

That said, if you are already a student of the period, these shortcomings are not going to present too much of an obstacle. Thucydides is a must-read for anyone with an interest in warfare 2,500 years ago, and £14.99 does represent decent value for money.

David Flinham

ON THE HORIZON

The Hopkins Touch: Harry Hopkins and the forging of the alliance to defeat Hitler

David L Roll

Oxford University Press, £20

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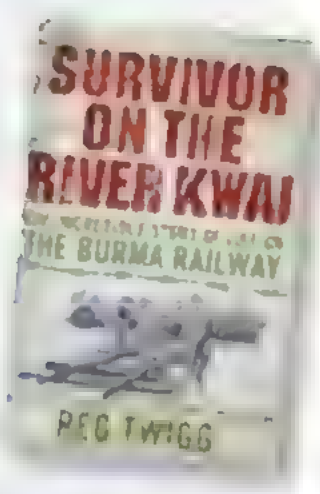
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Foreword by Regina von Luck

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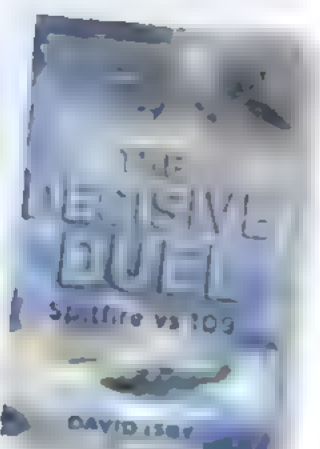
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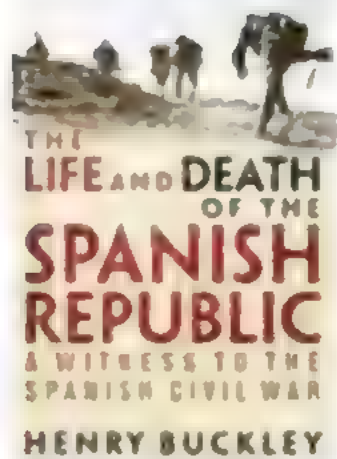


The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic

Henry Buckley

I B Tauris, £20

ISBN 978-1780764290



We are indeed fortunate to have this new edition of Henry Buckley's classic account of the Spanish Civil War, told from the Republican camp. The book has been unavailable in English since 1940, when, during the London Blitz, stacks of first editions were destroyed by an incendiary bomb.

Buckley arrived in Spain in 1930, shortly before the proclamation of the Second Republic. Six years later he was dodging bullets as *The Daily Telegraph's* war correspondent in Spain, where he came to witness more battles than any other foreign journalist. He also developed a close personal relationship with Ernest Hemingway and other leading protagonists of the Republican cause.

Buckley's commentaries on official British hypocrisy in the Spanish conflict sit uncomfortably with a nation that purports to uphold the principles of democratic legitimacy. Take, for instance, the case of the British government granting Italian pilots landing rights in Gibraltar, *en route* to attack Republican positions.

Buckley's narrative is tinged throughout with an acerbic irony: 'Nobody can say that the playing fields of Eton today do not produce a courtesy of a superlative character. Here were Italian pilots coming to Spain to help a friend of their nation (Franco) to defeat the legitimate government in order that Germany and Italy, with the aid of the new-found friend, could encircle France and prepare a death blow at the French and British Empires.'

Buckley commanded great esteem among his fellow journalists, one of whom said of him, 'He saw more of the Spanish Civil War than any other foreign correspondent and wrote about it with such a scrupulous adherence to the truth that he won the respect of those who sometimes would have preferred that it remained hidden.'

The book stands as an invaluable testament to truth, that infamous first casualty of war; a compassionate yet incisive eye-witness account of one of the 20th century's greatest tragedies.

Jules Stewart

Why Germany Nearly Won

Steven D Mercatante

Casemate Publishers, £20

ISBN 978-1612001630



How was it that between 1939 and 1941, a German Army confronted by superior enemy manpower managed to inflict successive defeats on the Allied forces?

The answer, argues Second World War historian Steven D Mercatante, can be found in the earlier days of the Prussian command structure, when chiefs of staff and their command teams became past-masters of efficiency, speed of decision-making, and movement. 'The Prussian army took quantum leaps forward over competing military establishments,' says the author.

These advantages unravelled in Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. By failing to establish dominion over western and southern Russia, Germany lost the opportunity to build a self-sustaining European empire. Hitler missed his chance to secure the economic resources necessary for fighting a prolonged war.

The book offers a fresh perspective on key events like the D-Day landings, when the Germans committed tactical errors. For instance, only one of three *panzer* divisions was brought in to mount a counter-attack, and it subsequently retreated for fear of its lines of communication being cut.

An aspect of received wisdom Mercatante challenges is the assertion that the quantitatively superior Allies then simply steamrollered the *Wermacht* in the final year of war. This period is the story of the steady qualitative ascendancy of the Anglo-American and Soviet forces.

The German Army's enduring strengths allowed it to continue inflicting appalling losses on its enemy and provided for the Third Reich's survival beyond reasonable expectations.

Put two military historians in a room and you are likely to get conflicting opinions on attrition versus manoeuvre and on different generals' command abilities, claims the author. Mercatante's views might be challenged in such a situation, but his scholarship is undoubtedly on solid ground, which makes this book a welcome addition to Second World War bibliography.

Jules Stewart

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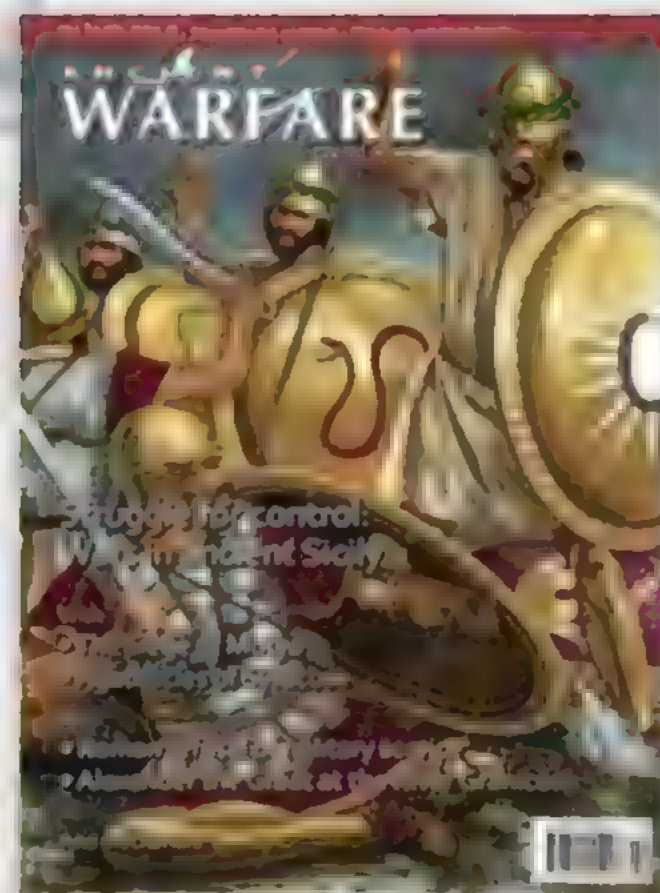
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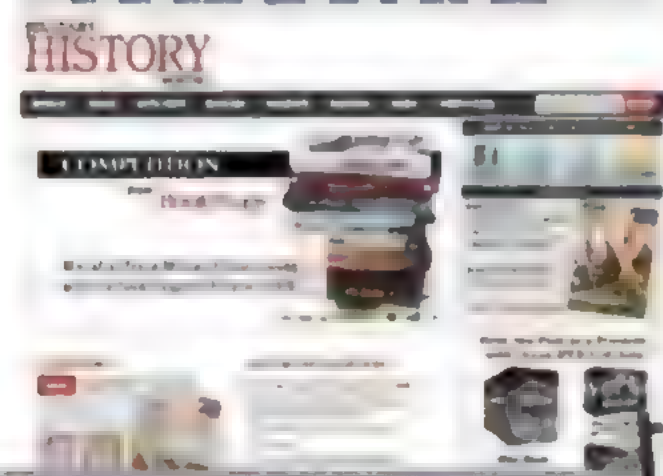


BLITZKRIEG IN POLAND

What was the significance of Nazi Germany's whirlwind conquest of its eastern neighbour in 1939? **Ian Maycock** reassesses the campaign.

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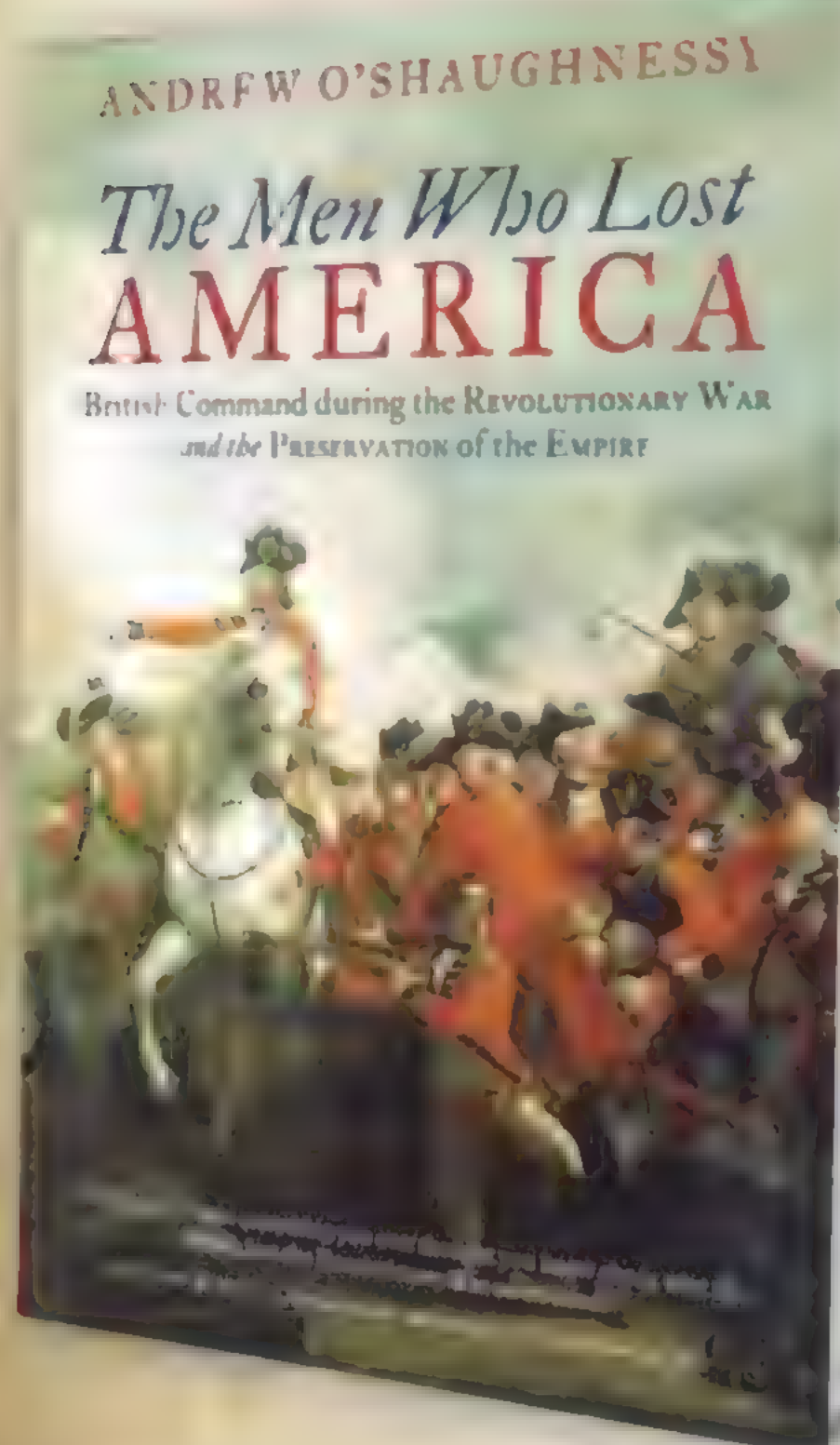
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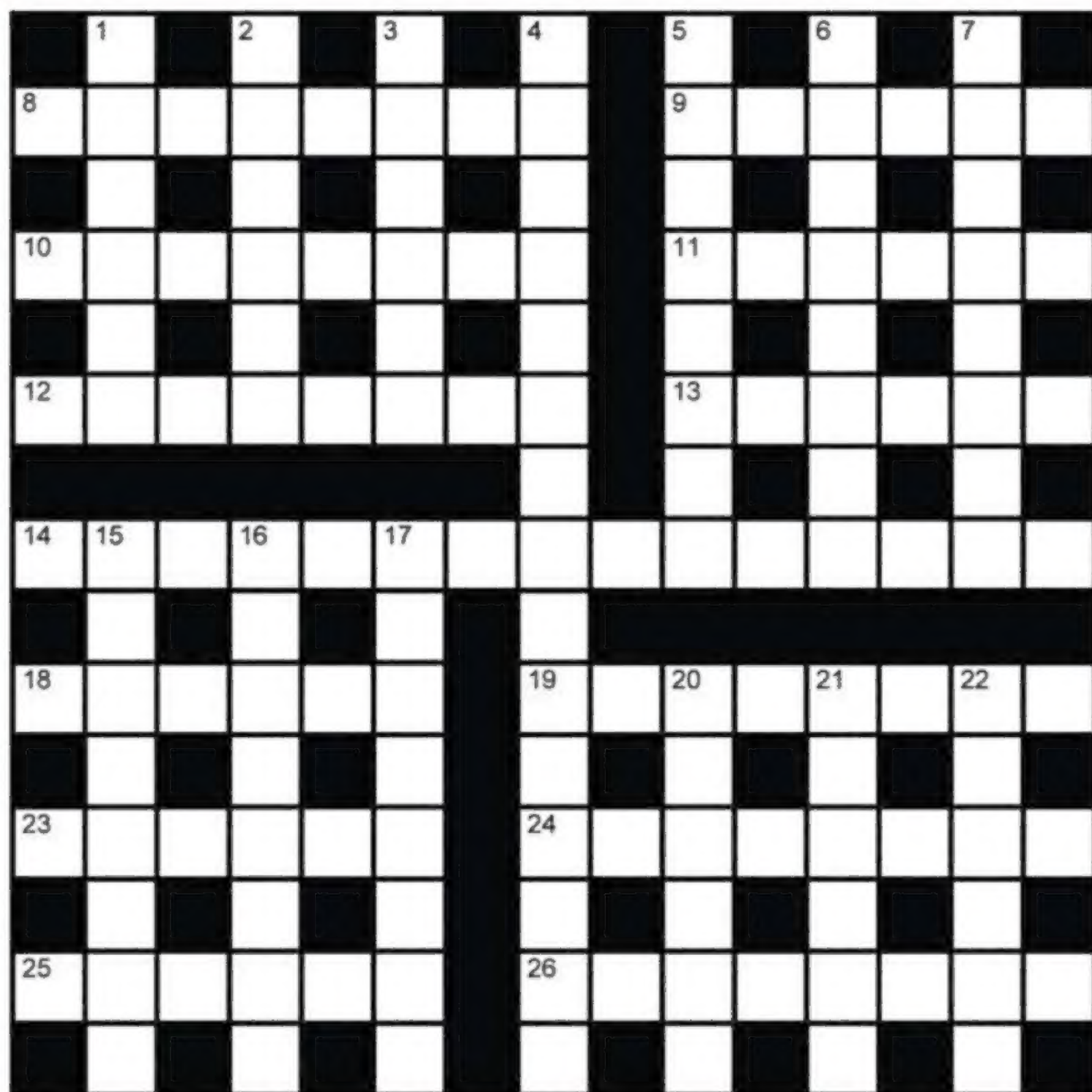
Andrew Roberts,

broadcaster and author of *The Storm of War*

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2. At which Virginia port town did the British forces under Cornwallis surrender to the French and Americans?
3. In what year did the Continental Congress adopt the Declaration of Independence?

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MHM CROSSWORD

Test your military history knowledge in our regular crossword.
The answers will be revealed in next month's issue of *MHM*.

ACROSS

- 8 Dutch former dancer and alleged spy, executed in Paris in 1917 (4,4)
- 9 Henry ____, US general who ensured that the Jeep was bought and used by the army (6)
- 10 ____ League, formed in 1576 to defend France against Protestantism (8)
- 11 NATO codename for the Russian-built Malyutka guided missile (6)
- 12 Ancient weapon that launched large spears or stones (8)
- 13 Henry ____, son-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, a leading figure in the New Model Army (6)
- 14 Film (1959) starring John Mills, based on Operation Source, the Royal Navy's attack on the Tirpitz using midget submarines (5,2,3,5)
- 18 Balkan city attacked with rockets by Serb forces in May 1995 (6)
- 19 Roman general, the longest-serving governor of Britain (8)
- 23 Italian town captured by the Eighth Army in June 1944 (6)
- 24 Welsh castle taken by Parliamentary forces in 1646 (8)
- 25 Castle ____, an early 12th-century keep near King's Lynn (6)
- 26 ____ Expeditionary Force, deployed in 1916 under the command of General Murray (8)

DOWN

- 1 Alimony ____, Mexican revolutionary who overthrew the dictator Porfirio Díaz (6)
- 2 Town in Tipperary sacked in 1647 by English Parliamentary troops during the Irish Confederate Wars (6)
- 3 Provo ____, Royal Navy Admiral, still on the active list when he died just before his 101st birthday in 1892 (6)
- 4 Ship such as HMS *Ark Royal* (8,7)
- 5 Queen Elizabeth Class battleship launched in 1913, one of nine Royal Navy ships to bear this name (8)
- 6 Irish town where, in 1649, Cromwell's troops massacred many of the garrison and civilians (8)
- 7 Royal Navy frigate sunk in San Carlos Water, Falkland Islands, on 24th May 1982 (8)
- 15 Hat of black fur worn by certain troops on ceremonial occasions (8)
- 16 US state where the battles of Chancellorsville and Cedar Creek took place (8)
- 17 Earl of ____, British cavalry commander whose right leg was amputated following a wound at Waterloo (8)
- 20 Japanese islands targeted by Allied forces during Operation Iceberg in April 1945 (6)
- 21 Trainees in military service (6)
- 22 Animals used briefly, and unsuccessfully, by the Israeli army for transporting supplies (6)

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We continue our online caption competition with an image from our Gettysburg feature. Pit your wit against *MHM* readers at www.military-history.org/competitions.

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Sorry Richard but, yes, your bum does look big in that.
LP



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No Sir Slackbladder,
I don't have a tin opener...
Jason Ollis

Tell me, how do you get
your helmet so shiny?
James Lamberton

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A JULY ISSUE | MHM34

ACROSS 7 Malaga, 8 Saracen, 10 Saumur, 11 Oklahoma, 12 Kean, 13 Nineteenth, 14 Battle of Britain, 18 Lieutenant, 21 Guam, 22 Xenophon, 23 Exocet, 24 Kinsale, 25 Argyll.

DOWN 1 Talavera, 2 Batman, 3 Lawrence, 4 Mallet, 5 Tashkent, 6 Helmet, 9 John of Gaunt, 15 Toulouse, 16 Rothesay, 17 Isabella, 19 Iberia, 20 Echols, 21 George.

The wrong type of machine-gun

Named to honour the 11th year of Emperor Taisho's reign in 1922, the Type 11 was Imperial Japan's first light machine-gun. It featured an ammunition feed system, which, though ingenious, solved one problem only – as we shall see – to create another.

Superseded by the Type 96 model in 1936 – which reverted to a more traditional box magazine but failed to resolve other issues satisfactorily – it was not until the introduction of the Type 99 in 1939 that the Japanese arms industry produced a reliable light machine-gun. By then, 29,000 of the Type 11 were in use, plus a further 8,600 of the Type 96, effectively committing a significant proportion of the Imperial Japanese Army to imperfect weapons for the duration of the Second World War.

Designed by General Kijiro Nambu, the man behind many of Japan's small arms, the Type 11 was based on the French Hotchkiss M1909, which was employed by many nations during the First World War, including Great Britain and the United States. Unlike the Hotchkiss, which used either a strip magazine or a belt to feed ammunition, the Japanese version had a hopper that could funnel clips of five bullets supplied for the Type 38 rifle. This

Below Imperial Japanese Army soldiers with the Type 11 light machine-gun in 1924.



Above A Japanese Type 11 light machine-gun and ammunition box.

Any infantryman could supply the right ammunition. But convenience came at a price.

meant that any infantryman could supply ammunition for the machine-gun. But convenience came at a price.

Water or dust could easily enter the firing mechanism through the open hopper, causing reliability issues. This problem was exacerbated by poor dimensional tolerance between the bolt

and gun barrel, which could cause spent shells to jam prior to ejection.

An automatic oiling system was included to lubricate cartridges before they entered the chamber. This might work perfectly on the firing range, but on the battlefield, dirt would mix with the oil to create a sludge that could jam the gun. During the Sino-Japanese war of the early 1930s it also became apparent that the hopper feed made the weapon unbalanced (because all the cartridges were packed on the left side).

So, General Nambu developed the Type 96, replacing the hopper with a conventional box magazine containing

30 rounds, similar to those fitted to Bren guns. The oiling system was also revised; the automatic oiler was replaced by a manual system fitted to the magazine loader. However, even though the magazine made the Type 96 more dirt-resistant than its

predecessor, the lubrication system still carried some dirt into the chamber with the oil, leading to jams.

Three years after its introduction, the Type 96 evolved into the Type 99, which had improved primary extraction and dispensed with the oiling system altogether. This significantly improved reliability.

However, this new system was designed to be compatible with the Type 99 rifle, which fired different ammunition from the earlier models. Therefore, infantry units equipped with the older pattern rifles continued to use the matching Type 11 and 96 machine-guns, while those using the 1939 pattern Type 99 rifle received the matching modern light machine-gun. This meant that soldiers using the older models would be out-gunned on the battlefield by almost all Allied troops they encountered. ☒

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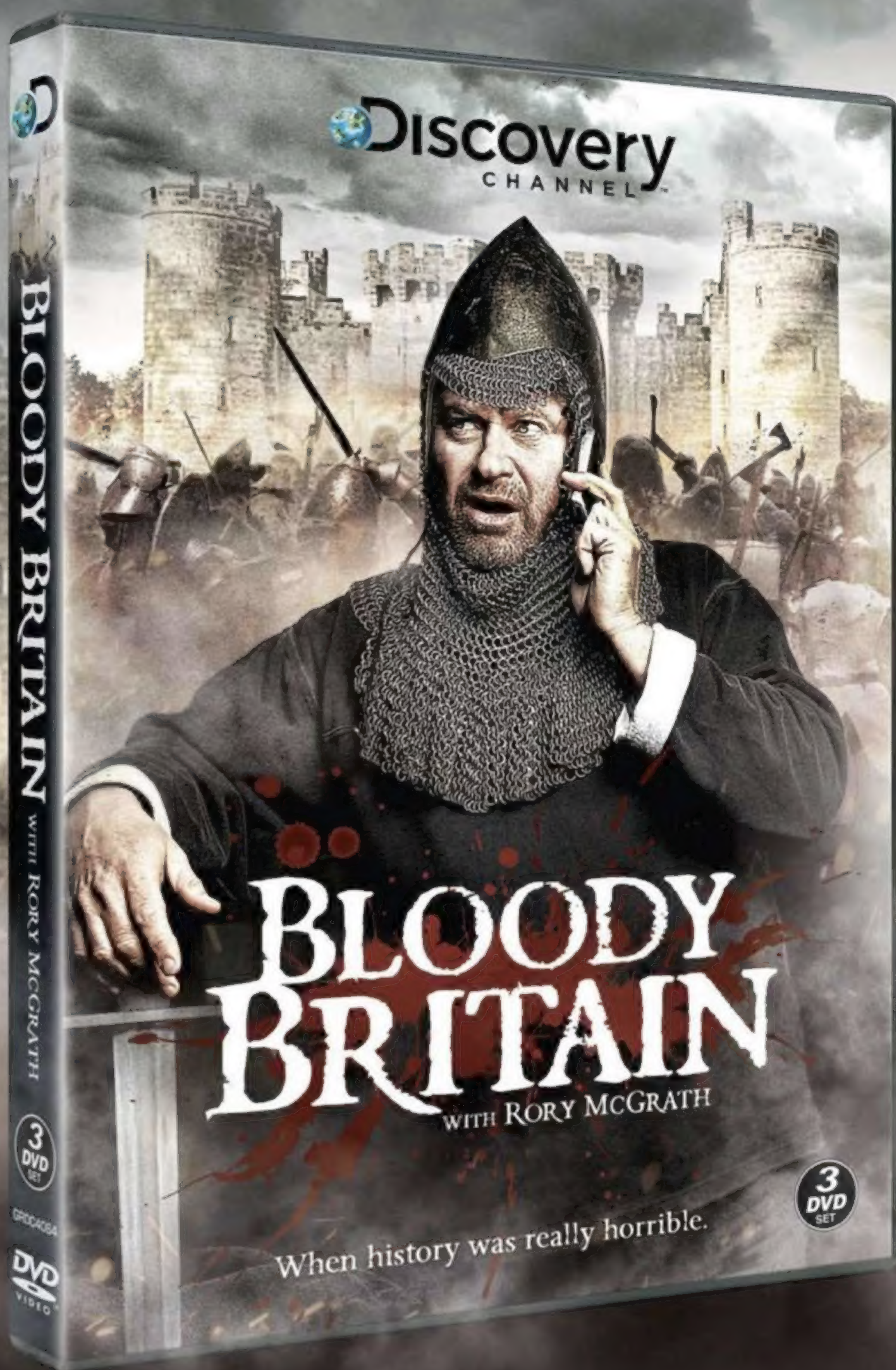
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